









LOTUS AND CHRYSANTHEMUM



# LOTUS AND CHRYSANTHEMUM

---

AN ANTHOLOGY OF CHINESE  
AND JAPANESE POETRY

*Selected & Edited by*

JOSEPH LEWIS FRENCH



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*To*

THAT SMALL BUT NOBLE BAND OF TRANSLATORS  
WHO ALONE HAVE MADE THIS WORK POSSIBLE  
IT IS HUMBLY DEDICATED



## INTRODUCTION

"If ever an age needed beautiful songs, our age needs them," remarks Lord Dunsany in his Introduction to the poems of Francis Ledwidge.

Chinese poetry is the largest body of verse in the world coming from a people of whom Ampère remarks, "Of all nations the Chinese seem to be fondest of poetry. All the educated write verses." This statement applies in later times to the uneducated as well. Says Judith Gautier writing of half a century ago: "Sometimes an independent author addresses himself directly to the people. He writes his verses on the wall of the entrance to a quarter, most often without signing them. People stop and read them and discuss them. If a scholar passes and finds the poem worthy the trouble he makes a copy of it which he keeps for his friends, and eventually he puts it with others similarly discovered. Poems kept in this manner are soon wafted from mouth to mouth, become famous and in the end, popular. It is thus posterity and a certain plebiscite which determines a poet's claim to distinction."

"In olden times," says Pan-Kou, "the sages themselves did not compare with the poets in estimation."

Chinese poetry is not only the largest but the oldest body of poetry in the world. Some of the odes in the Shi-King—a monumental work composed of some three thousand separate poems, covering the whole period of about a thousand years, during which the old states were formed and feudally related, down to the eighth century B.C. and from which Confucius compiled a selection of three hundred and eleven odes—are accepted by the highest authority as between twenty-five hundred and three thousand years old. The compendium of Confucius was adopted by the Chinese as a kind of poetical "Bible" and for at least three centuries after there seems to have been little incentive to poetical expression. But there was a reawakening and since then the poets of China have sung in many and beautiful strains.

Japanese poetry is a later growth. Its earliest written origins are traceable to about the beginning of the fifth century B.C. when the first Corean teacher arrived in the country; and the art of written expression began: although the very earliest Japanese compositions antedate even the art of writing.

The claim of this vast and important body of original literature found little recognition from the Latin races; obviously from the difficulties of the language—and little attention was paid to this ancient treasure-house even by the inquisitive English till about the end of the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Lord Macartney's mission, in 1792, the first embassy from the throne, brought back many curious and beautiful *objets d'art*, and a renewed interest in a land which had been forgotten since Marco Polo. Goldsmith conceived a very ingenious and timely idea in making his "Citizen of the World" (a series of essays which attracted wide attention in London at the time), a Chinese gentleman traveling in Europe. Sir William Jones at this period was drawn to the great field of classic Oriental literature, which he made his principal life-work. And a few independent translations were then attempted from the most curious and difficult of all tongues, some of which may possibly be found in the British Museum and the Ashmolean Library. The single item of the kind which the writer has come across in his necessarily restricted American researches is a curious little tome at Columbia University which bears the native title Han Kiou Choan, and the classic imprint of R. and J. Dodsley, London, 1761. The translator is J. Wilkinson. This is an ancient homily on Chinese morals and manners which gives the original text on the left-hand page, with the translation opposite. Since the opening of China to English commerce there have been occasional bits of translation of poetry by lonely English Consuls and missionaries—but few of these have reached America, and probably few of them have any special literary value.

The interest in Chinese poetry on the part of English scholars has increased greatly within the past fifty years, and has culminated finally in the excellent work in translation and paraphrase of Prof. Herbert A. Giles, of Clifford Bax, of Helen Waddell, of Bainbridge Fletcher, of Judith Gautier (in French), of Cecil Clementi, of E. Powys Mathers, of Ezra Pound, of Witter Bynner and of Amy Lowell, finally reaching a cap-sheaf in the splendid performances of L. Cranmer-Byng and of Arthur Waley.

The general interest in the field is increasing, and more volumes have appeared in the past decade than in the half-century that went before. Native Chinese authorities both in this country and China are apparently taking a new hold on the subject and volumes may now be expected in due course from Prof. Hu Shih of the National University of Peking (who I am told by a Chinese authority here is writing "a new poetry in Chinese"—I devoutly hope it is not in *vers libre!*), Dr. K. F. Kiang, formerly the professor of Chinese literature at the University of California, now President of the Southern University of Shanghai, and Prof. K. T. Mei of the Chinese department of Harvard, himself a promising young Chinese poet. It seems, indeed, as if Chinese poetry—as we have remarked, the oldest in the world—were indeed perennial.

Of Japanese poetry the same general story may be told. The reawakening seems to carry out that historical parallel between the two nations which has persisted from the beginnings of Japanese culture. The new interest in Chinese poetry is directly responsible for the recent work of Lafcadio Hearn, of Curtis Hidden Page, of Yone Noguchi, of the Fenollosas, of Ezra Pound, of Witter Bynner, of Clara Walsh, and finally of the inimitable Arthur Waley.

Chinese poetry must in all cases be compared with Chinese painting. Here is the most striking example in all art of the inseparable union of two arts, although the same general parallel exists in all nations. Chinese poems are like a panorama of Chinese mural paintings: we see the pretty girl out walking, daintily gathering her robe about her feet, and smiling that shy, modest, yet subtle smile that only Oriental femininity seems to know. We see the Emperor in his palace surrounded by his counselors: the Son of Heaven sits upon his throne as in Judith Gautier's poem and we are permitted to behold him in all his glory. We see the sage bending over his tome or in eager discourse with his disciple. The young nobleman rides off to the war attended by his retinue; the sage climbs to the hut of the hermit lost in the clouds—the hermit who can still teach him wisdom; the lorn wife studies the moon,—to the ancient Chinese as eloquent a symbol as to the Carthaginians,—whose pale beams stream through her window; the fisherman goes with net and spear to the lake to seek lampreys. The young son is conscripted and is driven off to fight for the Emperor amid the lamentations of his old parents. The hunter rides off to the chase on

his fleet and sturdy Tartar horse, that Pegasus of Chinese poetry. Hi Shih the Beautiful is pounding clothes at the brook as the Emperor passes by and claims her for one of his wives. (King Cophetua and the Beggar-maid.) We see the peach-tree in bloom, the cherry-flower—we behold the stately bamboo—the locust, the plantain. We see the troop going to war; the defense of the Great Wall. We see Li'Po taking wine with his fellow-poet Tu-Fu; we see Tu-Fu "Laughing at Nature." We see "The River's Brim"—"The Cottage," "The Flying-Fish," "A Drifting Lotus-petal." All these things we literally *see* as in Chinese painting—even where the poem is devoted to a mood we can see the subjective figure. It is this visual quality (call it *surface* if you will—but it is none the less subtle—and has endured throughout the ages) that gives Chinese poetry its own niche—its place apart and immortal. There is little epic hint in all this—and there is no machinery as of Olympus, for instance, such as is presented us by the Greek masters. Occasionally we have the tragic mood, but for the most part the note is naïve, always has charm, and is sometimes refined to the last degree. No master of poetry in any age but could have learned from these Chinese masters. They seem, whatever their shortcomings, always sufficient unto themselves; they ask and have accepted nothing from any other source. They never falter within their own range. Their art is a complete thing; it considers every aspect and mood of their own experience of the soul and of nature.

The aims of the present compilation are dual. First, to present a fairly representative compendium of the whole body of Chinese and Japanese poetry; and second to give pleasure to the reader. The selections have been made largely with the secondary purpose. Again, in the interest of the general reader, the various renderings from the same poet are interspersed throughout the book, and follow no specific chronology. This certainly infuses a greater sense of variety.

There are many interesting and curious facts in the development of Chinese and Japanese poetry, but the most important one—a kind of *summum bonum*—is that of all poetic literatures as rendered into English it seems to be the most self-revealing. Its virtues and its faults lie more open even to the most untrained sense than those of any other body of poetry in the world. Its subtleties are seldom cryptic even to the average intelligence. The attitude of the singer

is often akin to that of the lover who wears his heart upon his sleeve. Often and again, he suggests the strain of Austin Dobson:

“Oh, the song where not one of the Graces  
                        tight-laces,  
Where the muse like the piper a-playing  
                        comes Maying.”

This it is that makes Chinese poetry perennial. Thus it is that one can exclaim again with Dobson that:

“It will last till men weary of pleasure  
                        in measure!”

JOSEPH LEWIS FRENCH.



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I  
CHINESE POETRY



H S I E H T'IAO

(FIFTH CENTURY A.D.)

*Song of the Men of Chin-Ling*

(*Marching Back Into the Capital*)

Chiang-nan is a glorious and beautiful land,  
And Chin-ling an exalted and kingly province!  
The green canals of the city stretch on and on  
And its high towers stretch up and up.  
Flying gables lean over the bridle-road:  
Drooping willows cover the Royal Aqueduct.  
Shrill flutes sing by the coach's awning,  
And reiterated drums bang near its painted wheels.  
The name of the deserving shall be carved on the Cloud Terrace \*  
And for those who have done valiantly rich reward awaits.

Arthur Waley.

T S A N G C H I H

(SIXTH CENTURY)

*Song*

I was brought up under the Stone Castle:  
My window opened on to the castle tower.  
In the castle were beautiful young men  
Who waved to me as they went in and out.

Arthur Waley.

*The Little Lady of Ch'ing-Hsi*

(*A Children's Song*)

Her door opened on the white water  
Close by the side of the timber bridge:  
That's where the little lady lived  
All alone without a lover.

Arthur Waley.

\* The Record Office.

C H A N F A N G - S H E N G

(FOURTH CENTURY A.D.)

*Sailing Homeward*

Cliffs that rise a thousand feet  
Without a break,  
Lake that stretches a hundred miles  
Without a wave,  
Sands that are white through all the year,  
Without a stain,  
Pine-tree woods, winter and summer  
Ever-green,  
Streams that for ever flow and flow  
Without a pause,  
Trees that for twenty thousand years  
Your vows have kept,  
You have suddenly healed the pain of a traveller's heart,  
And moved his brush to write a new song.

*Arthur Waley.*

T A O - Y U N

(CIRCA A.D. 400)

*Climbing a Mountain*

High rises the Eastern Peak  
Soaring up to the blue sky.  
Among the rocks—an empty hollow,  
Secret, still, mysterious!  
Uncarved and unhewn,  
Screened by nature with a roof of clouds.  
Times and Seasons, what things are you  
Bringing to my life ceaseless change?  
I will lodge forever in this hollow  
Where Springs and Autumns unheeded pass.

*Arthur Waley.*

*Woman*

How sad it is to be a woman!  
 Nothing on earth is held so cheap.  
 Boys stand leaning at the door  
 Like Gods fallen out of Heaven.  
 Their hearts brave the Four Oceans,  
 The Wind and dust of a thousand miles.  
 No one is glad when a girl is born:  
 By *her* the family sets no store.  
 When she grows up, she hides in her room  
 Afraid to look a man in the face.  
 No one cries when she leaves her home—  
 Sudden as clouds when the rain stops.  
 She bows her head and composes her face,  
 Her teeth are pressed on her red lips:  
 She bows and kneels countless times.  
 She must humble herself even to the servants.  
*His* love is distant as the stars in Heaven,  
 Yet the sunflower bends toward the sun.  
 Their hearts more sundered than water and fire—  
 A hundred evils are heaped upon her.  
 Her face will follow the years' changes:  
 Her lord will find new pleasures.  
 They that were once like substance and shadow  
 Are now as far as Hu from Ch'in.\*  
 Yet Hu and Ch'in shall sooner meet  
 Than they whose parting is like Ts'an and Ch'en.†

*Arthur Waley.*

\*Two lands.

† Two stars.

L I P O

(705-762)

*The Women of Yueh—I*

She is a southern girl of Chang-kan Town;  
Her face is prettier than star or moon,  
And white like frost her feet in sandals—  
She does not wear the crow-head covers.

[See Notes 1 and 2.]

*The Women of Yueh—II*

Many a girl of the south is white and lucent.  
Often she will steer her shallop and play.  
In her coquettish eyes  
Lurks the lure of the spring-time.  
She will pluck the flowers of the water  
For amorous wayfarers.

*The Women of Yueh—III*

She is gathering lotus in the river of Yeh.  
She spies a passer-by, and turns round,  
Singing her boat song.  
She laughs, and hides away among the lilies;  
And seeming shy, she will not show her face again.

*The Women of Yueh—IV*

She, a Tung-yang girl, stands barefoot on the bank,  
He, a boatman of Kuei-chi, is in his boat.  
The moon has not set.  
They look at each other—broken-hearted.

## *The Women of Yueh—V*

The water of the Mirror Lake  
Is clear like the moon.  
The girl of Yeh-chi  
Has a face white as snow.  
Her silvery image  
Trembles in the silvery ripple. . . .

*Shigeyoshi Obata.*

## *Nocturne*

Blue water . . . a clear moon . . .  
In the moonlight the white herons are flying.  
Listen! Do you hear the girls who gather water-chestnuts?  
They are going home in the night, singing.

*Shigeyoshi Obata.*

## *A Summer Day*

Naked I lie in the green forest of summer. . . .  
Too lazy to wave my white feathered fan.  
I hang my cap on a crag,  
And bare my head to the wind that comes  
Blowing through the pine trees.

*Shigeyoshi Obata.*

## *The Summit Temple*

To-night I stay at the Summit Temple.  
Here I could pluck the stars with my hand,  
I dare not speak aloud in the silence,  
For fear of disturbing the dwellers of heaven.

*Shigeyoshi Obata.*

## *Sorrow of the Long Gate Palace*

The glad spring goes unattended  
At the laurel bower where sorrow is long;  
But on the four walls of gold

The autumn dust clings like grief;  
And night holds the bright mirror up in the emerald sky  
For the lonely one in the Palace of Long Gate.

*Shigeyoshi Obata.*

### *The Imperial Concubine*

When a little child,  
She was reared in a golden house,  
Now ripe and lovely, she dwells  
In the imperial palace of purple.  
She will come forth from the innermost chamber,  
A mountain flower in her glossy hair,  
Robed in pink embroidered silk;  
And always return at evening,  
Accompanying the imperial palanquin.  
Only, alas!—the hours of dance and song  
Swiftly vanish into the sky  
To tint, perhaps, the flying clouds in happy colors!

*Shigeyoshi Obata.*

### *Parting at Ching-Men*

Faring far across the river-narrow of Ching-men  
I have come with you into the land of Chu.  
Here ends the mountain-range that stretches along the plain,  
While the river flowing on, enters the distant heavens.  
Now under the moon like a mirror flying through the sky,  
And the rising clouds that build palaces and towers,  
I bid you farewell. Ten thousand *li* you sail away,  
But it is the waters of the home river that bear you on.

*Shigeyoshi Obata.*

### *A Pretty Maid of Wu*

She comes on pony-back: she is fifteen.  
Blue-painted eyebrows—  
Shoes of pink brocade—  
Inarticulate speech—  
But she sings bewitchingly well.

*Shigeyoshi Obata.*

## *The Lotus*

In the deep sequestered stream the lotus grows,  
Blooming fresh and fair in the morning sun.  
Its glowing petals hide the clear autumn water,  
And its thick leaves spread like blue smoke.  
Alas! in vain its beauty excels the world.  
Who knows? Who will speak of its rare perfume?  
Lo, the frost will come, chilling the air,  
And its crimson must wither, its fragrance fade.  
Ill it has chosen the place to plant its root.  
Would it could move to the margin of a flower pond!

*Shigeyoshi Obata.*

## *To Tung Tsao-Chiu*

Tung Tsao-chiu of Lo-yang, friend,  
I remember the good old time.  
You built me a wine-house to the south of the Tien-chin Bridge  
Songs were bought with yellow gold, and laughter with white  
jewels.  
Months went by in one long lasting rapture; we scorned kings and  
princes.

Wise and valiant men from all shores were there as your guests.  
Among them I was your special friend, you had my heart's devotion.  
For you I would not have declined to uproot mountains and over-  
turn the sea.  
To you I bared my heart and soul without hesitation.

I journeyed to Hwai-nan to dwell in the laurel grove;  
You remained in the north of Lo, with many sad dreams.  
The separation was more than we could bear,  
So we met again and went together.

We went together a long way to Hsien-cheng  
Through the thirty-six turns of the river, winding round and round,  
And amid the voices of the pine-wind over the innumerable cliffs,  
Which having ceased—lo!  
We burst into a valley—into the light of a thousand flowers.

There on the level ground with their horses of golden reins and  
silver saddles

Stood the governor of Han-tung and his men, who had come to  
meet us.

The Taoist "initiates" of Tzu-yang welcomed us, too, blowing on  
their jeweled bamboo pipes.

They took us on the Tower of Mist-Feasting,—what a music there  
stirred!

Such celestial notes! It seemed all the sacred birds of heaven sang  
together.

With those pipes playing, our long sleeves began to flap lightly.  
At last the governor of Han-chung, drunken, rose and danced;

It was he, who covered me with his brocade robe;

And I, drunk too, chose his lap for pillow and went to sleep.

During the feast our spirits soared high over the ninth heaven,  
But ere the morning we were scattered like stars and rain,

Scattered hither and thither, the Pass of Chu separating us wide,  
As I sought my old nest in the mountains,

And you returned to your home across the Bridge of Wei.

Your honorable father, brave as leopard and tiger,

Became the governor of Ping-chow then;

And stopt the barbarian invasion:

In May you called me and I crossed the mountain of Tai-hsing.

My cart-wheels were broken on the steep passes, winding like sheep  
guts; but that did not matter.

I traveled on and came to Pe-liang and stayed for months.

What hospitality! What squandering of money!

Red jade cups and rare dainty food on tables inlaid with green  
gems!

You made me so rapturously drunk that I had no thought of  
returning.

Oft we went out to the western edge of the city,

To the Temple of Chin, where the stream was clear as emerald;  
Where on a skiff afloat we played with water and made music on

pipes and drums;

Where the tiny waves looked like dragon-scales—and how green  
were the reeds in the shallows!

Pleasure-inspired, we took singing girls and gaily sailed the stream  
up and down.

How beautiful are their vermillioned faces, when half-drunken,  
they turn to the setting sun,

While the willow-flakes are flying about them like snow,  
And their green eyebrows are mirrored in all the clear water one  
hundred feet deep!

And comelier still are the green eyebrows when the new moon  
shines.

The beautiful girls sing anew and dance in robes of thin silk.  
Their songs, lifted by the zephyr, pass away in the sky,  
But the sweet notes seem to linger in the air, hovering about the  
wandering clouds.

The delight of those days cannot be had again.

I went west and offered my *Ode of the Long Willows*,  
But to my skyey ambition the imperial gates were closed.  
I came back to the East Mountain, white-headed.

I met you once more at the south end of the Bridge of Wei;  
But once more we parted company north of Tsan-tai

You ask me the measure of my sorrow—

Pray, watch the fast falling flowers at the going of spring!

I would speak, but speech could not utter all,

Nor is there an end to my heart's grief.

I call my boy and bid him kneel down and seal this letter,  
And I send it to you a thousand miles, remembering.

*Shigeyoshi Obata.*

### *On Being Asked Who He Is*

I call myself the Green Lotus Man;

I am a spirit exiled from the upper blue;

For thirty years I've hid my fame in wine shops.

Warrior of Lake Province, why must you ask about me?

Behold me, a reincarnation of the Buddha of Golden Grain!

*Shigeyoshi Obata.*

## WEN C H E N M I N G

### *The Bamboo Grove*

On the hillock I plant many tall bamboos,  
Which form themselves into a grove at its foot.  
There even in midsummer you have autumn weather,  
And, under the dense foliage, you won't know when it is noon.  
In this grove there is one who, free of worldly cares,  
With a lute and a goblet, is enjoying the sweetness of life.  
When the wind blows he wakes up from intoxication,  
And, sitting erect, he listens to the rustling of the leaves.

*Mo Zung Chung.*

### *The Locust Tent*

Out on the lawn grows a locust of immense size  
That casts an extensive shade like a verdant tent.  
Awakening from my dream I see the black ants busy at boring holes,  
And remember that in spring-time the green caterpillars will be  
spinning thread.

*Mo Zung Chung.*

### *The Plantain Balustrade*

The fresh plantain is full ten feet high,  
And after a shower it is as clean as one after a bath.  
It does not object to the height of the white wall;  
It is in love, apparently, with the red balustrade.  
Oh! Be careful not to clip its leaves recklessly  
Save them for a cool shade which extends to the house.—  
The autumnal sounds pervade my cool pillows.  
The dawning light brightens up the green window sills.

*Mo Zung Chung.*

[See Note 3.]

## *The Garden of the Gems*

Gently descends the spring breeze upon the tall trees laden with  
gem-like blossoms;  
Serenely shines the queenly moon as if hung on a hook of coral.  
Her silvery light falls upon this spot and dispels the vision of Mount  
Koo Yih, home of the fairies,  
But back comes again the dream of Mount Lu Ver, land of the  
plum flowers, when I lie on the pillows in slumber.  
I dream that the cruel east wind is raging over the Mount, on his  
mission of destruction,  
And awaking, I see Orion's transit and the moon's decline among  
the hills.  
This immortal flower, favourite of bards of old, now comes to  
crown your garden;  
You cleave the tough greensward and plant a gem-like tree and  
wait to see it burst forth into full bloom.—  
Methinks I have ascended into a silver palace of the fairies,  
Teeming with queens of rare beauty, their skin white as snow and  
clear as ice.  
Thousands upon thousands are they in number, all inhabitants of  
Boon Lai Isle,  
Dancing and frolicking in wild glee upon the moon at Yao Tai.  
But then Yao Tai and Yuan Pu, realms of the fairies, are far,  
far away,  
They are away beyond the shoreless, limitless oceans, misty, obscure  
regions are they.  
If the kingdom of the fairies could be moved into this dusty world,  
Wouldn't the owner also be a fairy, a merry, care-free sprite of the  
enchanted forest?  
I recall the time years ago when he departed from the Capital,  
Harassed by untoward circumstance, and yet stout of heart;  
But now he has returned through all the long way to preserve his  
integrity,  
To remain spotless and undefiled even in ugly adversity.  
But he comes quietly, without playing the fife on a high tower.

*Mo Zung Chung.*

J U D I T H   G A U T I E R

*The Shadow of the Orange-Leaves*

(After Tin-Tung-Ling)

The young girl who works all day in her solitary chamber is moved to tenderness if she hears of a sudden the sound of a jade flute.

And she imagines that she hears the voice of a young boy.

Through the paper of the windows the shadow of the orange-leaves enters and sits on her knees;

And she imagines that somebody has torn her silken dress.

*Stuart Merrill, trans. from the French.*

*The Emperor*

(After Thoo-Foo)

Upon a throne of new gold, the Son of Heaven, sparkling with precious stones, is sitting among the Mandarins; he seems a sun environed by stars.

The Mandarins speak gravely of grave things; but the thought of the Emperor has flown through the open window.

In her pavilion of porcelain, like a resplendent flower, surrounded by leaves, the Empress is sitting among her women.

She thinks that her beloved tarries too long at the council, and wearily she waves her fan.

A knot of perfumes caresses the Emperor's face.

"My beloved, with a wave of her fan, sends me the perfume of her mouth." And the Emperor, radiant with precious stones, walks towards the pavilion of porcelain, leaving the astonished Mandarins to stare at one another in silence.

*Stuart Merrill.*

### *A Poet Gazes on the Moon*

(After Tang-Jo-Su)

From my garden I hear a woman singing, but in spite of her I gaze on the moon.

I have never thought of meeting the woman who sings in the neighboring garden; my gaze ever follows the moon in the heavens.

I believe that the moon looks at me too, for a long silver ray penetrates to my eyes.

The bats cross it ever and anon, and oblige me suddenly to lower my lids; but when I lift them again, I still see the silver gleam darted upon me.

The Moon mirrors herself in the eyes of poets as in the brilliant scales of the dragons, those poets of the sea.

*Stuart Merrill.*

### *By the River*

(After Li-Taï-Fé)

The young girls have gone down to the river; they sink among the tufts of lilies.

They cannot be seen, but their laughter is heard, and the wind blows perfumes from their dresses.

A young man on horseback passes by the edge of the river, close to the young girls.

One of them has felt her heart beat, and her face has changed color.

But the tufts of lilies close around him.

*Stuart Merrill.*

### *The Sadness of the Husbandman*

(After Soo-Tong-Po)

The snow has fallen lightly on the earth, like a mist of butterflies.

The husbandman has dropped his spade, and it seems to him as though invisible threads were tightening around his heart.

He is sad, for the earth was his friend; and when he bent over

her to intrust her with the seeds of hope, he confided to her also his secret thoughts.

And later, when the seeds had germinated, he found his thoughts in full bloom.

And now the earth hides herself under a veil of snow.

*Stuart Merrill.*

### *The Mysterious Flute*

(*After Li-Tai-Pé*)

One day, from beyond the foliage and the perfumed flowers, the wind brought me the sound of a distant flute.

I carved a willow branch and I answered with a song.

Since then, at night, when everything is asleep, the birds enjoy a conversation in their own language.

*Stuart Merrill.*

### *Fisherman*

(*After Li-Tai-Pé*)

The earth has drunk the snow, and now are seen once more the blossoms of the plum-tree.

The leaves of the willow are like new gold, and the lake seems a lake of silver.

Now is the time when the butterflies powdered with sulphur rest their velvety heads upon the hearts of the flowers.

The fisherman, from his motionless boat, casts forth his nets, breaking the surface of the water.

He thinks of her who stays at home like the swallow in her nest, of her whom he will soon see again, when he brings her food, like the swallow's mate.

*Stuart Merrill.*

### *The Sages' Dance*

(*After Li-Tai-Pé*)

On my flute, tipped with jade, I sang a song to mortals; but the mortals did not understand.

Then I lifted my flute to the heavens, and I sang my song to the Sages.

The Sages rejoiced together, they danced on the glistening clouds.  
And now mortals understand me, when I sing to the accompaniment of my flute tipped with jade.

*Stuart Merrill.*

### *The Red Flower*

(After Li-Tai-Pé)

While working sadly by my window, I pricked my finger, and the white flower that I was embroidering became a red flower.

Then I thought suddenly of him who has gone from me to fight the rebels; I imagined that his blood was flowing also, and tears fell from my eyes.

But methought that I heard the sound of his horse's steps, and I arose joyously. It was my heart, which, beating too fast, imitated the sound of his horse's steps.

And I resumed my work by the window, and my tears embroidered with pearls the stuff stretched on the frame.

*Stuart Merrill.*

### *The Moonlight in the Sea*

(After Li-Su-Tchong)

The full moon has just risen from the water.

The sea is like a great platter of silver.

On a boat, a few friends are drinking cups of wine.

And as they look at the little clouds that balance themselves on the mountain lighted by the moon:—

Some say that they are the wives of the Emperor that are wandering above, clad in white,

And others pretend that they see a cloud of swans.

*Stuart Merrill.*

### *Near the Mouth of the River*

(After Li-Tai-Pé)

The little waves shine in the light of the moon, that changes into silver the limpid green of the water; one would take them for a thousand fishes swimming towards the sea.

I am alone in my boat and it glides along the shore; sometimes

I skim the water with my oars; night and solitude fill my heart with sadness.

But here is a tuft of water-lilies with its flowers that look like great pearls; I caress them softly with my oars.

The leaves rustle and murmur with tenderness, and the flowers, inclining their little white heads, look as though they were talking to me.

The water-lilies wish to console me; but on seeing them, I had already forgotten my sadness.

*Stuart Merrill.*

### *The House in the Heart*

(*After Thoo-Foo*)

The cruel flames have entirely devoured the house in which I was born.

To distract my grief I then embarked in a vessel which was gilded from stem to stern.

I took my carved flute, and I sang to the moon; but I saddened the moon, who veiled herself with a cloud.

I turned towards the mountain, but it inspired in me no thoughts.

It seemed to me that all the joys of my childhood had burned with my house.

I yearned for death, and I leaned over the sea. At that moment a woman was passing in a boat. I took her for the moon reflecting herself in the water.

If she would only consent, I would build myself a house in her heart.

*Stuart Merrill.*

### *A Young Girl's Cares*

(*After Hang-Oo*)

The moon lights the interior court; I put my head out of the window, and I look at the steps of the stair-way.

I see the reflection of the foliage and the agitation of the shadows of the swing rocked by the wind.

I retire and lie down on my trellised bed; the coolness of the night has seized me; I tremble in my solitary chamber.

And now I hear the rain falling in the lake! To-morrow my little boat will be wet; how shall I be able to cull the water-lilies?

*Stuart Merrill.*

*Indifference to the Lures of Spring*

(After Tang-Jo-Su)

The peach-blossoms flutter like pink butterflies; the willow sees itself smiling in the water.

Yet my weariness persists, and I cannot write poetry.

The breeze from the coast, bringing me the perfume of the plum-trees, finds me indifferent.

Ah! when will night come and make me forget my sadness in sleep.

*Stuart Merrill.*

J. WING

*Song*

You would climb after nectarines  
In your little green jacket and puffy white trousers  
So that you fell and I caught you—  
You made as if to break away,  
And then settled snuggling in my arms,  
All your lightness and softness were pressed against me,  
And your face looked up from my breast  
Pucker'd with amusement.

It would be something of the sort  
If our clear blue night full of white stars  
Turned to a night of coloured stars—  
Red and purple and green to the zenith,  
And orange and light violet and lemon,  
And bright rose and crimson all about the sky.

E. Powys Mathers.

*The Golden Book, 1925.*

LIPPO

*Sy-che and the King*

Round the Palace of Waters gently the wind moves the flowers  
of the water-lilies.

On the highest terrace of Kou-Sou one sees the King of Lou lazily  
lying

And before him Sy-Che, after whom beauty was named, dances  
with lovely grace of delicate weak gestures.

Then she laughs that she is so voluptuously weary, and languidly  
leans to the East on the white jade of the royal bed.

*E. Powys Mathers.*

Y U A N M E

(1715-1797)

*In the Cold Night*

Reading in my book this cold night  
I have forgotten to go to sleep.  
The perfumes have died on the gilded bed-cover;  
The last smoke must have left the hearth  
When I was not looking.  
My beautiful friend snatches away the lamp.  
Do you know what the time is?

*E. Powys Mathers.*

T I N - T U N - L I N G

*Fantasy*

The young girl that in her chamber from dawn till eve alone  
Broiders silk flowers on robes, deliciously shudders  
At the unexpected sound of a far flute;  
It seems to her that the voice of a young man is kissing her ear.

And when across the oiled paper  
Of the high windows the orange leaves  
Come and touch and make their shadows run on her knees  
It seems to her that a hand is tearing her robe of silk.

*E. Powys Mathers.*

J. W I N G

*Song-Writer Paid with Air*

I sit on a white wood box  
Smeared with the black name

Of a seller of white sugar.  
The little brown table is so dirty  
That if I had food  
I do not think I could eat.

How can I promise violets drunken in wine  
For your amusement,  
How can I powder your blue cotton dress  
With splinters of emerald,  
How can I sing you songs of the amber pear,  
Or pour for the finger-tips of your white fingers  
Mingled scents in a rose agate bowl?

*E. Powys Mathers.*

### W A N G C H ' A N G L I N G

#### *The Western Window*

At the head of a thousand roaring warriors,  
With the sound of gongs,  
My husband has departed  
Following glory.

At first I was overjoyed  
To have a young girl's liberty.

Now I look at the yellowing willow-leaves;  
They were green the day he left.

I wonder if he also was glad?

*E. Powys Mathers.*

A N O N Y M O U S

*Written on a Wall in Spring\**

It rained last night,  
But fair weather has come back  
This morning.

The green clusters of the palm-trees  
Open and begin to throw shadows.

But sorrow drifts slowly down about me.

I come and go in my room,  
Heart-heavy with memories.

The neighbor green casts shadows of green  
On my blind;  
The moss, soaked in dew,  
Takes the least print  
Like delicate velvet.

I see again a gauze tunic of orang'd rose  
With shadowy underclothes of grenade red.

How things still live again.

I go and sit by the day balustrade.  
And do nothing

Except count the plains  
And the mountains  
And the valleys  
And the rivers

That separate from any Spring.

*E. Powys Mathers.*

\* See quotation from Judith Gautier in Introduction.

*The Jade Staircase*

The jade staircase is bright with dew.

Slowly, this long night, the queen climbs,  
Letting her gauze stockings and her elaborate robe  
Drag in the shining water.

Dazed with the light,  
She lowers the crystal blind  
Before the door of the pavilion.

It leaps down like a waterfall in sunlight.

While the tiny clashing dies down,  
Sad and long dreaming,  
She watches between the fragments of jade light  
The shining of the Autumn moon.

*E. Powys Mathers.*

J. S. L I N G

(1901-A.D.?)

*A Morning Shower*

The young lady shows like a thing of light  
In the shadowy deeps of a fair window  
Grown round with flowers.

She is naked and leans forward, and her flesh like frost  
Gathers the light beyond the stone brim.

Only the hair made ready for the day  
Suggests the charm of modern fashion.

Her blond eyebrows are the shape of very young moons.

The shower's bright water overflows  
In a pure rain.

She lifts one arm into an urgent line,  
Cooling her rose fingers  
On the grey metal of the spray.

If I could choose my service, I would be the shower  
Dashing over her in the sunlight.

*E. Powys Mathers.*

W A N G C H I  
(SIXTH AND SEVENTH CENTURIES)

*The White Frost*

The white frost covers all the arbute-trees  
Like powder on the faces of women.

Looking from my window I consider  
That a man without women  
Is like a flower—naked without its leaves.

To drive away my bitterness  
I write this thought with my narrow breath  
On the white frost.

*E. Powys Mathers.*

L I P O

*A Flute of Marvel*

Under the leaves and cool flowers  
The wind brought to me the sound of a flute  
From far away.

I cut a branch of willow  
And answered with a lazy song.

Even at night, when all slept,  
The birds were listening to a conversation  
In their own language.

*E. Powys Mathers.*

L I T'A I - P O  
[FROM "FIR-FLOWER TABLETS"]

*The Lonely Wife*

The mist is thick. On the wide river, the water-plants float smoothly.

No letters come; none go.

There is only the moon, shining through the clouds of a hard, jade-green sky,

Looking down at us so far divided, so anxiously apart.

All day, going about my affairs, I suffer and grieve, and press the thought of you closely to my heart.

My eyebrows are locked in sorrow, I cannot separate them.

Nightly, nightly, I keep ready half the quilt,

And wait for the return of that divine dream which is my Lord.

Beneath the quilt of the Fire-Bird, on the bed of the Silver-Crested Love-Pheasant,

Nightly, nightly, I drowse alone.

The red candles in the silver candlesticks melt, and the wax runs from them,

As the tears of your so Unworthy One escape and continue constantly to flow.

A flower face endures but a short season,

Yet still he drifts along the river Hsiao and the river Hsiang.

*Florence Ayscough and Amy Lowell.*

*Looking at the Moon After Rain*

The heavy clouds are broken and blowing,

And once more I can see the wide common stretching beyond the four sides of the city.

Open the door. Half of the moon-toad is already up,

The glimmer of it is like smooth hoar-frost spreading over ten thousand *li*.

The river is a flat, shining chain.

The moon, rising, is a white eye to the hills;

After it has risen, it is the bright heart of the sea.

[See Notes 4 and 5.]

Because I love it—so—round as a fan,  
I hum songs until the dawn.

*Amy Lowell.*

### *Fighting to the South of the City*

Last year they fought at the source of the Sang Ch'ien,  
This year they fight on the road by the Leek-green River.  
The soldiers were drenched by the waters of the Aral Sea,  
The horses were turned loose to find grass in the midst of the snows  
of the Heaven High Hills.

Over ten thousand *li*, they attacked and fought,  
The three divisions are crumbled, decayed, utterly worn and old.  
The Hsiung Nu use killing and slaughter in the place of the busi-  
ness of plowing.

From ancient times, only dry, white bones are seen on the yellow  
sand-fields.

The House of Ch'in erected and pounded firm the wall to make a  
barrier before the dwelling-place of the Barbarians,  
The House of Han still preserved the beacon-stands where fires  
are lighted.

The lighting of beacon fires on the stands never ceases,  
The fighting and attacking are without a time of ending.  
In savage attack they die—fighting without arms.

The riderless horses scream with terror, throwing their heads up  
to the sky.

Vultures and kites tear the bowels of men with their beaks  
And fly to hang them on the branches of dead trees.  
Officers and soldiers lying in mud, in grass, in undergrowth.  
Helpless, the General—Yes, incapable before this!  
We have learnt that soldiers are evil tools,  
But wise men have not accomplished the ending of war, and still  
we employ them.

*Florence Ayscough and Amy Lowell.*

### *The Young Girls of Yüeh*

#### I

Young girls are gathering lotus-seeds on the pond of Ya.  
Seeing a man on the bank, they turn and row away singing.

Laughing, they hide among the lotus-flowers,  
And, in a pretence of bashfulness, will not come out.

## II

Many of the young girls of Wu are white, dazzlingly white.  
They like to amuse themselves by floating in little boats on the water.  
Peeping out of the corners of their eyes, they spurn the Springtime heart.  
Gathering flowers, they ridicule the passer-by.

*Florence Ayscough and Amy Lowell.*

### *Songs of the Marches*

#### I

It is the Fifth Month,  
But still the Heaven-high hills  
Shine with snow.  
There are no flowers  
For the heart of the earth is yet too chilly.  
From the centre of the camp  
Comes the sound of a flute  
Playing "The Snapped Willow."  
No colour mists the trees,  
Not yet have their leaves broken.  
At dawn, there is the shock and shouting of battle,  
Following the drums and the loud metal gongs.  
At night, the soldiers sleep, clasping the pommels of their jade-ornamented saddles.  
They sleep lightly,  
With their two-edged swords girt below their loins,  
So that they may be able in an instant to rush upon the Barbarians  
And destroy them.

#### II

Horses!  
Horses!  
Swift as the three dogs' wind!  
Whips stinging the clear air like the sharp calling of birds,

They ride across the camel-back bridge  
Over the river Wei.  
They bend the bows,  
Curving them away from the moon which shines behind them  
Over their own country of Han.  
They fasten feathers on their arrows  
To destroy the immense arrogance of the foe.  
Now the regiments are divided  
And scattered like the five-pointed stars,  
Sea mist envelops the deserted camp,  
The task is accomplished,  
And the portrait of Ho P'iao Yao  
Hangs magnificently in the Lin Pavilion.

### III

When Autumn burns along the hills,  
The Barbarian hordes mount their horses  
And pour down from the North.  
Then, in the country of Han,  
The Heavenly soldiers arise  
And depart from their homes.  
The High General  
Divides the tiger tally.  
Fight, Soldiers!  
Then lie down and rest  
On the Dragon sand.  
The frontier moon casts the shadows of bows upon the ground,  
Swords brush the hoar-frost flowers of the Barbarians' country.  
The Jade Pass has not yet been forced,  
Our soldiers hold it strongly.  
Therefore the young married women  
May cease their lamentations.

### IV

The Heavenly soldiers are returning  
From the sterile plains of the North.  
Because the Barbarians desired their horses  
To drink of the streams of the South,  
Therefore were our spears held level to the charge

In a hundred fights.  
In straight battle our soldiers fought  
To gain the supreme gratitude  
Of the Most High Emperor.  
They seized the snow of the Inland Sea  
And devoured it in their terrible hunger.  
They lay on the sand at the top of the Dragon Mound  
And slept.  
All this they bore that the Moon Clan  
Might be destroyed.  
Now indeed have they won the right  
To the soft, high bed of Peace.  
It is their just portion.

*Florence Ayscough and Amy Lowell.*

P O C H Ü-I

*The Temple*

Autumn: the ninth year of Yüan Ho; \*

The eighth month, and the moon swelling her arc;  
It was then I travelled to the Temple of Wu-chēn,  
A temple terraced on Wang Shun's Hill.

While still the mountain was many leagues away,  
Of scurrying waters we heard theplash and fret.  
From here the traveller, leaving carriage and horse,  
Begins to wade through the shallows of the Blue Stream,  
His hand pillared on a green holly-staff,  
His feet treading the torrent's white stones.

A strange quiet stole on ears and eyes,  
That knew no longer the blare of the human world.

From mountain-foot gazing at mountain-top,  
Now we doubted if indeed it could be climbed;  
Who had guessed that a path deep hidden there  
Twisting and bending crept to the topmost brow?

Under the flagstaff we made our first halt;  
Next we rested in the shadow of the Stone Shrine.†

The shrine-room was scarce a cubit long,  
With doors and windows unshuttered and unbared.

I peered down, but could not see the dead;  
Stalactites hung like a woman's hair.

Waked from sleep, a pair of white bats  
Fled from the coffin with a whirr of snowy wings.

I turned away, and saw the Temple gate—  
Scarlet eaves flanked by steeps of green;

'Twas as though a hand had ripped the mountain-side

[See Note 4.]

\* A.D. 814.

† Where the mummified bodies of priests were kept, in miniature temples.

And filled the cleft with a temple's walls and towers.  
Within the gate, no level ground;  
Little ground, but much empty sky.  
Cells and cloisters, terraces and spires  
High and low, followed the jut of the hill.  
On rocky plateaux with no earth to hold  
Were trees and shrubs, gnarled and very lean.  
Roots and stems stretched to grip the stone;  
Humped and bent, they writhed like a coiling snake.  
In broken ranks pine and cassia stood,  
Through the four seasons forever shady-green.  
On tender twigs and delicate branches breathing  
A quiet music played like strings in the wind.  
Never pierced by the light of sun or moon,  
Green locked with green, shade clasping shade.  
A hidden bird sometimes softly sings;  
Like a cricket's chirp sounds its muffled song.

At the Strangers' Arbour a while we stayed our steps;  
We sat down, but had no mind to rest.  
In a little while we had opened the northern door.  
Ten thousand leagues suddenly stretched at our feet!  
Brushing the eaves, shredded rainbows swept;  
Circling the beams, clouds spun and whirled.  
Through red sunlight white rain fell;  
Azure and storm swam in a blended stream.  
In a wild green clustered grasses and trees,  
The eye's orbit swallowed the plain of Ch'in.  
Wei River was too small to see;  
The Mounds of Han,\* littler than a clenched fist.  
I looked back; a line of red fence,  
Broken and twisting, marked the way we had trod.  
Far below, toiling one by one,  
Later climbers straggled on the face of the hill.

Straight before me were many Treasure Towers,  
Whose wind-bells at the four corners sang.  
At door and window, cornice and architrave,  
“Kap, kap,” the tinkle of gold and jade.

\* The tombs of the Han Emperors.

Some say that here the Buddha Kāśyapa \*  
Long ago quitted Life and Death.  
Still they keep his iron begging-bowl,  
With the furrow of his fingers chiselled deep at the base.  
To the east there opens the Jade Image Hall,  
Where white Buddhas sit like serried trees.  
We shook from our garments the journey's grime and dust,  
And bowing worshipped those faces of frozen snow  
Whose white cassocks like folded hoar-frost hung,  
Whose beaded crowns glittered like a shower of hail.  
We looked closer; surely Spirits willed  
This handicraft, never chisel carved!

Next we climbed to the Chamber of Kuan-yin; †  
From afar we sniffed its odours of sandal-wood.  
At the top of the steps each doffed his shoes;  
With bated stride we crossed the Jasper Hall.  
The Jewelled Mirror on six pillars propped,  
The Four Seats cased in hammered gold  
Through the black night glowed with beams of their own,  
Nor had we need to light candle or lamp.  
These many treasures in concert nodded and swayed—  
Banners of coral, pendants of cornaline.  
When the wind came, jewels chimed and sang  
Softly, softly like the music of Paradise.  
White pearls like frozen dewdrops hanging;  
Dark rubies split like clots of blood,  
Spangled and sown on the Buddha's twisted hair,  
Together fashioned his Sevenfold Jewel-crown.  
In twin vases of pallid tourmaline  
(Their colour colder than the waters of an autumn stream)  
The calcined relics of Buddha's Body rest—  
Rounded pebbles, smooth as the Specular Stone.  
A jade flute, by angels long ago  
Borne as a gift to the Garden of Jetavan! ‡

\* Lived about 600,000,000,000 years ago and achieved Buddhahood at the age of 20,000.

† One of the self-denying Bodhisattvas who abstain from entering Buddhahood in order better to assist erring humanity. In Sanskrit, Avalokiteśvara.

‡ Near Benares; here Buddha preached most of his Sūtras and the first monastery was founded.

It blows a music sweet as the crane's song  
That Spirits of Heaven earthward well might draw.

It was at autumn's height,  
The fifteenth day and the moon's orbit full.  
Wide I flung the three eastern gates;  
A golden spectre walked at the chapel-door.  
And jewel-beams now with moonbeams strove,  
In freshness and beauty darting a crystal light  
That cooled the spirit and limbs of those it touched,  
Nor all night long needed they to rest.  
At dawn I sought the road to the Southern Tope,  
Where wild bamboos nodded in clustered grace.  
In the lonely forest no one crossed my path;  
Beside me faltered a cold butterfly.  
Mountain fruits whose names I did not know  
With their prodigal bushes hedged the pathway in;  
The hungry here copious food had found;  
Idly I plucked, to test sour and sweet.

South of the road, the Spirit of the Blue Dell,\*  
With his green umbrella and white paper pence!  
When the year is closing, the people are ordered to grow,  
As herbs of offering, marsil and motherwort;  
So sacred the place, that never yet was stained  
Its pure earth with sacrificial blood.

In a high cairn four or five rocks  
Dangerously heaped, deep-scarred and heeling—  
With what purpose did he that made the World  
Pile them here at the eastern corner of the cliff?  
Their slippery flank no foot has marked,  
But mosses stipple like a flowered writing-scroll.  
I came to the cairn, I climbed it right to the top;  
Beneath my feet a measureless chasm dropped.  
My eyes were dizzy, hand and knee quogged—  
I did not dare bend my head and look.  
A boisterous wind rose from under the rocks,  
Seized me with it and tore the ground from my feet.

\* A native, non-Buddhist deity.

My shirt and robe fanned like mighty wings,  
And wide-spreading bore me like a bird to the sky.  
High about me, triangular and sharp,  
Like a cluster of sword-points many summits rose.  
The white mist that struck them in its airy course  
They tore asunder, and carved a patch of blue.

And now the sun was sinking in the north-west;  
His evening beams from a crimson globe he shed,  
Till far beyond the great fields of green  
His sulphurous disk suddenly down he drove.

And now the moon was rising in the south-east;  
In waves of coolness the night air flowed.  
From the grey bottom of the hundred-fathom pool  
Shines out the image of the moon's golden disk!  
Blue as its name, the Lan River flows  
Singing and plashing forever day and night.  
I gazed down; like a green finger-ring  
In winding circuits it follows the curves of the hill;  
Sometimes spreading to a wide, lazy stream,  
Sometimes striding to a foamy cataract.  
Out from the deepest and clearest pool of all,  
In a strange froth the Dragon's-spittle \* flows.

I bent down; a dangerous ladder of stones  
Paved beneath me a sheer and dizzy path.  
I gripped the ivy, I walked on fallen trees,  
Tracking the monkeys who came to drink at the stream.  
Like a whirl of snowflakes the startled herons rose,  
In damask dances the red sturgeon leapt.  
For a while I rested, then plunging in the cool stream,  
From my weary body I washed the stains away.  
Deep or shallow, all was crystal clear;  
I watched through the water my own thighs and feet.  
Content I gazed at the stream's clear bed;  
Wondered, but knew not, whence its waters flowed.

The eastern bank with rare stones is rife;  
In serried courses the dusky chrysoprase,

\* Ambergris.

That outward turns a smooth, glossy face;  
In its deep core secret diamonds \* lie.  
Pien of Ch'u † died long ago,  
And rare gems are often cast aside.  
Sometimes a radiance leaks from the hill by night  
To link its beams with the brightness of moon and stars.

At the central dome, where the hills highest rise,  
The sky is pillared on a column of green jade;  
Where even the spotty lizard cannot climb  
Can I, a man, foothold hope to find?  
In the top is hollowed the White-lotus lake;  
With purple cusps the clear waves are crowned.  
The name I heard, but the place I could not reach;  
Beyond the region of mortal things it lies.

And standing here, a flat rock I saw,  
Cubit-square, like a great paving-stone,  
Midway up fastened in the cliff-wall;  
And down below it, a thousand-foot drop.  
Here they say that a Master in ancient days  
Sat till he conquered the concepts of Life and Death.  
The place is called the Settled Heart Stone;  
By aged men the tale is still told.

I turned back to the Shrine of Fairies' Tryst;  
Thick creepers covered its old walls.  
Here it was that a mortal ‡ long ago  
On new-grown wings flew to the dark sky;  
Westward a garden of agaric and rue  
Faces the terrace where his magic herbs were dried.  
And sometimes still on clear moonlit nights  
In the sky is heard a yellow-crane's voice.

I turned and sought the Painted Dragon Hall,  
Where the bearded figures of two ancient men

\* The stone mentioned (*yü-fan*), though praised by Confucius and used in the ceremonies of his native state, cannot be identified. Its name evokes vague ideas of rarity and beauty.

† Suffered mutilation because he had offered to his prince a gem which experts rejected. Afterwards it turned out to be genuine.

‡ The wizard Wang Shun, after whom the hill is named.

By the Holy Lectern at sermon-time are seen  
In gleeful worship to nod their hoary heads;  
Who, going home to their cave beneath the river,  
Of weather-dragons the writhing shapes assume.  
When rain is coming they puff a white smoke  
In front of the steps, from a round hole in the stone.

Once a priest who copied the Holy Books  
(Of purpose dauntless and body undefiled)  
Loved yonder pigeons, that far beyond the clouds  
Fly in flocks beating a thousand wings.  
They came and dropped him water in his writing-bowl;  
Then sipped afresh in the river under the rocks.  
Each day thrice they went and came,  
Nor ever once missed their wonted time.  
When the Book was finished, he was named "Holy Priest";  
For like glory in vain his fellows vied.  
He sang the hymns of the Lotus Blossom Book,\*  
Again and again, a thousand, a million times.  
His body withered, but his mouth still was strong,  
Till his tongue turned to a red lotus-flower.  
    His bones no more are seen;  
But the rock where he sat is still carved with his fame.

On a plastered wall are frescoes from the hand of Wu,†  
Whose pencil-colours never-fading glow.  
On a white screen is writing by the master Ch'u,‡  
The tones subtle as the day it first dried.

Magical prospects, monuments divine—  
    Now all were visited.  
Here we had tarried five nights and days;  
Yet homeward now with loitering footsteps trod.  
I, that a man of the wild hills was born,  
Floundering fell into the web of the World's net.  
Caught in its trammels, they forced me to study books;

\* The verses of the Saddharma-pundarīka Sūtra, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 21.

† The great eighth-century painter, Wu Tao-tzü.

‡ The calligrapher, Ch'u Sui-liang, A.D. 596-658.

Twitched and tore me down the path of public life.  
Soon I rose to be Bachelor of Arts;  
In the Record Office, in the Censorate I sat.  
My simple bluntness did not suit the times;  
A profitless servant, I drew the royal pay.  
The sense of this made me always ashamed,  
And every pleasure a deep brooding dimmed.  
To little purpose I sapped my heart's strength,  
Till seeming age shrank my youthful frame.  
From the very hour I doffed belt and cap  
I marked how with them sorrow slank away.  
But now that I wander in the freedom of streams and hills  
My heart to its folly comfortably yields.  
Like a wild deer that has torn the hunter's net  
I range abroad by no halters barred.  
Like a captive fish loosed into the Great Sea  
To my marble basin I shall not ever return.  
My body girt in the hermit's single dress,  
My hand holding the Book of Chuang Chou,  
On these hills at last I am come to dwell,  
Loosed forever from the shackles of a trim world.  
I have lived in labour forty years and more;  
If Life's remnant vacantly I spend,  
Seventy being our span, then thirty years  
Of idleness are still left to live.

*Arthur Waley, trans.*

W A N G   I

(CIRCA A.D. 120)

*The Lychee-Tree*

Sombre as the heavens when morning clouds arise,  
Bushy as a great broom held across the sky,  
Vast as the spaces of a lofty house,  
Deep fretted as a line of stony hills.  
Long branches twining,  
Green leaves clustering,  
And all a-glimmer like a mist that lightly lies  
Across the morning sun;

All spangled, darted with fire like a sky  
Of populous stars.  
Shell like a fisherman's red net;  
Fruit white and lustrous as a pearl, . . .  
Lambent as the jewel of Ho, more strange  
Than the saffron-stone of Wu.  
Now sigh we at the beauty of its show,  
Now triumph in its taste.  
Sweet juices lie in the mouth;  
Soft scents invade the mind.  
All flavours here are joined, yet none is master;  
A hundred diverse tastes  
Blend in such harmony no man can say  
That one outstrips the rest. Sovereign of sweets,  
Peerless, pre-eminent fruit, who dwellest apart  
In noble solitude!

*Arthur Waley.*

W A N G Y E N - S H O U , S O N O F W A N G I

(CIRCA A.D. 130)

*The Wangsun\**

Sublime was he, stupendous in invention,  
Who planned the miracles of earth and sky.  
Wondrous the power that charged  
Small things with secret beauty, moving in them all.  
See now the wangsun, crafty creature, mean of size,  
Uncouth of form; the wrinkled face  
Of an aged man; the body of a little child.  
See how in turn he blinks and blenches with an air  
Pathetically puzzled, dimly gazes  
Under tired lids, through languid lashes  
Looks tragic and hollow-eyed, rumples his brow,  
Scatters this way and that  
An insolent, astonished glare;  
Sniffs and snorts, snuffs and sneezes,  
Snicks and cocks his knowing little ears!  
Now like a dotard mouths and chews;

\* A kind of small, tailless ape.

Or hoots and hisses through his pouted lips;  
Shows gnashing teeth, grates and grinds ill-temperedly,  
Gobbles and puffs and scolds.  
And every now and then,  
Down to his belly, from the larder that he keeps  
In either cheek, he sends  
Little consignments lowered cautiously.  
Sometimes he squats  
Like a puppy on its haunches, or hare-like humps  
An arching back;  
Smirks and wheedles with ingratiating sweetness;  
Or suddenly takes to whining, surly snarling;  
Then, like a ravening tiger roars.

He lives in thick forests, deep among the hills,  
Or houses in the clefts of sharp, precipitous rocks;  
Alert and agile is his nature, nimble are his wits;  
Swift are his contortions,  
Apt to every need,  
Whether he climb tall tree-stems of a hundred feet,  
Or sways on the shuddering shoulder of a long bough.  
Before him, the dark gullies of unfathomable streams;  
Behind, the silent hollows of the lonely hills.  
Twigs and tendrils are his rocking-chairs,  
On rungs of rotting wood he trips  
Up perilous places; sometimes, leap after leap,  
Like lightning flits through the woods.  
Sometimes he saunters with a sad, forsaken air;  
Then suddenly peeps round  
Beaming with satisfaction. Up he springs,  
Leaps and prances, whoops, and scampers on his way.  
Up cliffs he scrambles, up pointed rocks,  
Dances on shale that shifts or twigs that snap,  
Suddenly swerves and lightly passes. . . .  
Oh, what tongue could unravel  
The tale of all his tricks?

Alas, one trait  
With the human tribe he shares; their sweets his sweet,  
Their bitter is his bitter. Off sugar from the vat

Or brewer's dregs he loves to sup.  
So men put wine where he will pass.  
How he races to the bowl!  
How nimbly licks and swills!  
Now he staggers, feels dazed and foolish,  
Darkness falls upon his eyes. . . .  
He sleeps and knows no more.  
Up steal the trappers, catch him by the mane,  
Then to a string or ribbon tie him, lead him home;  
Tether him in the stable or lock him into the yard;  
Where faces all day long  
Gaze, gape, gasp at him and will not go away.

*Arthur Waley.*

### T S O U Y A N G

(CIRCA 200-140 B.C.)

#### *Wine*

The clear makes wine, the thick makes *li*;  
The clear's a wise man, swift of apprehension;  
The thick, a dull-brained dolt.  
Yet both with corn were yeasted  
Of the self-same trickling hill; with rice were brewed  
Of the same country field—  
Not sooner than the summer-winds began to blow,  
Nor after the onset of Autumn's iron reign.  
Oh marvellous, that things so like  
Should taste so different; emblem how admirable  
Of Man's capacities, diverse yet fit  
Each in its several way to serve!  
Here limpid liquor rolls its fire;  
Here flows sweet-brew with rich and oozy motion.  
The lees have sunk, the must is drawn away;  
The green jars open stand.  
Now through the wicker sieve, now through the cloth  
Filters the liquid; now is it racked, now fined,  
To grace the carnivals of common folk,  
The courtly ceremonies of the great.

Diverse in kind and quality is it brewed;  
Shalo there is, and the Green Wine of Ling;  
“Cheng Village,” Johsia, the limpid “Baron Kao”;  
Popo from between the Passes, and from the Azure Isles  
The wine Jung-t’ing.  
Fierce, long-fermented spirits; generous raw wines  
Whose fumes a thousand days confuse the head.

A wise King rules our land; his favoured court  
Is rich in holidays; round him he gathers  
Grey-bearded ministers and decorous guests.  
Wide, comfortable couches by carven screens  
He bids his servants lay; and for the feast decrees  
Goblets of yak’s horn, dishes of silver and gold.  
Long robes sweep,  
Broad sleeves flap,  
Ribbons dance in the air—  
The mighty men, contented heroes,  
Smiling take their seats.  
My lord the King  
Lies at his jewelled table, at his back  
A jewelled screen.  
His hand is raised; that one sign suddenly  
Sets many jaws in motion; at every seat  
Millet is crunched and pitchers freely flow.  
Soon are platters empty, wine-cups standing on their heads.  
Then speaks the Counsellor a rhyme:  
*Friends (says he), when your neighbour sings on Doh  
Do you chime in with Soh,  
Lest mirth to madness grow!*

Whereon the kindly King

Sends round a famous cake whose virtue can dispel  
To-night’s intoxication and prevent  
To-morrow’s heavy head.  
“Live for ever, O King, rule for ever, and may your glory  
shine  
Eternal as the sun by day, the moon by night!”

*Arthur Waley.*

C H A N G   H E N G

(A.D. 78-139)

*The Bones of Chuang Tzu\**

I, Chang P'ing-Tzu, had traversed the Nine Wilds and seen their wonders,

In the eight continents beheld the ways of Man,  
The Sun's procession, the orbit of the Stars,  
The surging of the dragon, the soaring of the phoenix in his flight.  
In the red desert to the south I sweltered,  
And northward waded through the wintry burghs of Yu.  
Through the Valley of Darkness to the west I wandered,  
And eastward travelled to the Sun's extreme abode,  
The stooping Mulberry Tree.

So the seasons sped; weak autumn languished,  
A small wind woke the cold.

And now with rearing of rein-horse,  
Plunging of the tracer, round I fetched  
My high-roofed chariot to westward.  
Along the dykes we loitered, past many meadows,  
And far away among the dunes and hills.  
Suddenly I looked and by the roadside  
I saw a man's bones lying in the squelchy earth,  
Black rime-frost over him; and I in sorrow spoke  
And asked him, saying, "Dead man, how was it?  
Fled you with your friend from famine and for the last grains  
Gambled and lost? Was this earth your tomb,  
Or did floods carry you from afar? Were you mighty, were you  
wise,  
Were you foolish and poor? A warrior, or a girl?"  
Then a wonder came; for out of the silence a voice—  
Thin echo only, in no substance was the Spirit seen—  
Mysteriously answered, saying, "I was a man of Sung,  
Of the clan of Chuang; Chou was my name.

\* The great Taoist philosopher whose works have been translated by Professor Giles.

Beyond the climes of common thought  
My reason soared, yet could I not save myself;  
For at the last, when the long charter of my years was told,  
I too, for all my magic, by Age was brought  
To the Black Hill of Death.  
Wherefore, O Master, do you question me?"  
Then I answered:  
"Let me plead for you upon the Five Hill-tops,  
Let me pray for you to the Gods of Heaven and the Gods of Earth,  
That your white bones may arise,  
And your limbs be joined anew.  
The God of the North shall give me back your ears;  
I will scour the Southland for your eyes;  
From the sunrise will I wrest your feet;  
The West shall yield your heart.  
I will set each several organ in its throne;  
Each subtle sense will I restore.  
Would you not have it so?"  
The dead man answered me:  
"O Friend, how strange and unacceptable your words!  
In death I rest and am at peace; in life, I toiled and strove.  
Is the hardness of the winter stream  
Better than the melting of spring?  
All pride that the body knew,  
Was it not lighter than dust?  
What Ch'ao and Hsü despised,  
What Po-ch'ēng fled,  
Shall I desire, whom death  
Already has hidden in the Eternal Way—  
Where Li Chu cannot see me,  
Nor Tzŭ Yeh hear me,  
Where neither Yao nor Shun can praise me,  
Nor the tyrants Chieh and Hsin condemn me,  
Nor wolf nor tiger harm me,  
Lance prick me nor sword wound me?  
Of the Primal Spirit is my substance; I am a wave  
In the river of Darkness and Light.  
The Maker of All Things is my Father and Mother,  
Heaven is my bed and earth my cushion,  
The thunder and lightning are my drum and fan,

The sun and moon my candle and my torch,  
The Milky Way my moat, the stars my jewels.  
With Nature am I conjoined;  
I have no passion, no desire.  
Wash me and I shall be no whiter,  
Foul me and I shall yet be clean.  
I come not, yet am here;  
Hasten not, yet am swift.”  
The voice stopped, there was silence.  
A ghostly light  
Faded and expired.  
I gazed upon the dead, stared in sorrow and compassion.  
Then I called upon my servant that was with me  
To tie his silken scarf about those bones  
And wrap them in a cloak of sombre dust;  
While I, as offering to the soul of this dead man,  
Poured my hot tears upon the margin of the road.

*Arthur Waley.*

# C H U A N G T Z Ü

(FOURTH CENTURY B.C.)

## *Life the Dream*

“How then do I know but that the dead repent of having previously clung to life?

“Those who dream of the banquet, wake to lamentation and sorrow. Those who dream of lamentation and sorrow, wake to join the hunt. While they dream, they do not know that they dream. Some will even interpret the very dream they are dreaming; and only when they awake do they know it was a dream. By and by comes the Great Awakening, and then we find out that this life is really a great dream. Fools think they are awake now, and flatter themselves they know if they are really princes or peasants. Confucius and you are both dreams; and I who say you are dreams,—I am but a dream myself.

“Once upon a time, I, Chuang Tzü, dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious only of following my fancies as a butterfly, and was unconscious of my individuality as a man. Suddenly, I awaked, and there I lay, myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly dreaming I am a man.”

*H. A. Giles.*

## *The Two Spirits*

“It was the time of autumn floods. Every stream poured into the river, which swelled in its turbid course. The banks receded so far from one another that it was impossible to tell a cow from a horse.

“Then the Spirit of the River laughed for joy that all the beauty of the earth was gathered to himself. Down with the stream he.

journeyed east, until he reached the ocean. There, looking eastwards and seeing no limit to its waves, his countenance changed. And as he gazed over the expanse, he sighed and said to the Spirit of the Ocean, ‘A vulgar proverb says, that he who has heard but part of the truth thinks no one equal to himself. And such a one am I.

“‘When formerly I heard people detracting from the learning of Confucius, or underrating the heroism of Po I, I did not believe. But now that I have looked upon your inexhaustibility—alas for me had I not reached your abode, I should have been for ever a laughing-stock to those of comprehensive enlightenment!’

“To which the Spirit of the Ocean replied, ‘You cannot speak of ocean to a well-frog,—the creature of a narrower sphere. You cannot speak of ice to a summer-insect,—the creature of a season. You cannot speak of Tao to a pedagogue: his scope is too restricted. But now that you have emerged from your narrow sphere and have seen the great ocean, you know your own insignificance, and I can speak to you of great principles.’”

H. A. Giles.

### *The Frog and the Turtle*

“Have you never heard of the frog in the old well?—The frog said to the turtle of the eastern sea, ‘Happy indeed am I! I hop on to the rail around the well. I rest in the hollow of some broken brick. Swimming, I gather the water under my arms and shut my mouth. I plunge into the mud, burying my feet and toes; and not one of the cockles, crabs, or tadpoles I see around me are my match. (Fancy pitting the happiness of an old well, ejaculates Chuang Tzü, against all the water of Ocean!) Why do you not come, sir, and pay me a visit?’

“Now the turtle of the eastern sea had not got its left leg down ere its right had already stuck fast, so it shrank back and begged to be excused. It then described the sea, saying, ‘A thousand *li* would not measure its breadth nor a thousand fathoms its depth. In the days of the Great Yü, there were nine years of flood out of ten; but this did not add to its bulk. In the days of T’ang, there were seven years out of eight of drought; but this did not narrow its span. Not to be affected by duration of time, not to be affected by volume of water,—such is the great happiness of the eastern sea.’

"At this the well-frog was considerably astonished, and knew not what to say next. And for one whose knowledge does not reach to the positive-negative domain, to attempt to understand me, Chuang Tzü, is like a mosquito trying to carry a mountain, or an ant to swim a river,—they cannot succeed."

H. A. Giles.

### *The Refusal*

"Chuang Tzü was fishing in the P'u when the prince of Ch'u sent two high officials to ask him to take charge of the administration of the Ch'u State.

"Chuang Tzü went on fishing, and without turning his head said, 'I have heard that in Ch'u there is a sacred tortoise which has been dead now some three thousand years. And that the prince keeps this tortoise carefully enclosed in a chest on the altar of his ancestral temple. Now would this tortoise rather be dead, and have its remains venerated, or be alive and wagging its tail in the mud?'

"'It would rather be alive,' replied the two officials, 'and wagging its tail in the mud.'

"'Begone!' cried Chuang Tzü. 'I too will wag my tail in the mud.'"

H. A. Giles.

### FROM THE SHI-KING

#### *The Wife*

##### I

"You seemed a guileless youth enough,  
Offering for silk your woven stuff;  
But silk was not required by you;  
I was the silk you had in view.  
With you I crossed the ford, and while  
We wandered on for many a mile  
I said, 'I do not wish delay,  
But friends must fix our wedding-day. . . .  
Oh, do not let my words give pain,  
But with the autumn come again.'

[See Note 5.]

“And then I used to watch and wait  
To see you passing through the gate;  
And sometimes, when I watched in vain,  
My tears would flow like falling rain;  
But when I saw my darling boy,  
I laughed and cried aloud for joy.  
The fortune-tellers, you declared,  
Had all pronounced us duly paired;  
‘Then bring a carriage,’ I replied,  
‘And I’ll away to be your bride.’

“The mulberry-leaf’s not yet undone  
But autumn chill shines in the sun.  
O tender love I would advise,  
Beware the fruit that tempts thy eyes!’,  
O maiden fair, not yet a spouse,  
List lightly not to lovers’ vows!  
A man may do this wrong, and time  
Will fling its shadow o’er his crime;  
A woman who has lost her name  
Is doomed to everlasting shame.

II

“The mulberry-tree upon the ground  
Now sheds its yellow leaves around.  
Three years have slipped away from me  
Since first I shared your poverty;  
And now again, alas the day!  
Back through the ford I take my way.  
My heart is still unchanged, but you  
Have uttered words now proved untrue;  
And you have left me to deplore  
A love that can be mine no more.

“For three long years I was your wife,  
And led in truth a toilsome life;  
Early to rise and late to bed,  
Each day alike passed o’er my head.  
I honestly fulfilled my part,  
And you—well, you have broke my heart.

The truth my brothers will not know,  
So all the more their gibes will flow.  
I grieve in silence and repine  
That such a wretched fate is mine.

“Ah, hand in hand to face old age!—  
Instead, I turn a bitter page.  
O for the river-banks of yore;  
O for the much-loved marshy shore;  
The hours of girlhood, with my hair  
Ungathered, as we lingered there.  
The words we spoke, that seemed so true,  
I little thought that I should rue;  
I little thought the vows we swore  
Would some day bind us two no more.”

*H. A. Giles.*

### *Ode*

“A clever man builds a city,  
A clever woman lays one low;  
With all her qualifications, that clever woman  
Is but an ill-omened bird.  
A woman with a long tongue  
Is a flight of steps leading to calamity;  
For disorder does not come from heaven,  
But is brought about by women.  
Among those who cannot be trained or taught  
Are women and eunuchs.”

*H. A. Giles.*

### *Tempus Fugit*

“You have coats and robes,  
But you do not trail them;  
You have chariots and horses,  
But you do not ride in them.  
By and by you will die,  
And another will enjoy them.

“You have courtyards and halls,  
But they are not sprinkled and swept;  
You have bells and drums,  
But they are not struck.  
By and by you will die,  
And another will possess them.

“You have wine and food;  
Why not play daily on your lute,  
That you may enjoy yourself now  
And lengthen your days?  
By and by you will die,  
And another will take your place.”

*H. A. Giles.*

S U N G Y Ü

(FOURTH CENTURY B.C.)

*The Philosopher*

“Among birds the phœnix, among fishes the leviathan  
holds the chiefest place;  
Cleaving the crimson clouds  
the phœnix soars apace,  
With only the blue sky above,  
far into the realms of space;  
But the grandeur of heaven and earth  
is as naught to the hedge-sparrow race.

“And the leviathan rises in one ocean  
to go to rest in a second,  
While the depth of a puddle by a humble minnow  
as the depth of the sea is reckoned.

“And just as with birds and with fishes,  
so too it is with man;  
Here soars a phœnix,  
there swims a leviathan . . .

Behold the philosopher, full of nervous thought,  
    with a flame that never grows dim,  
Dwelling complacently alone;  
say, what can the vulgar herd know of him?"  
*H. A. Giles.*

C H U - Y U A N  
(FOURTH CENTURY B.C.)

*Banishment*  
*From the "Li Sao"*

"Methinks there is a Genius of the hills, clad in wistaria, girdled with ivy, with smiling lips, of witching mien, riding on the red pard, wild cats galloping in the rear, reclining in a chariot, with banners of cassia, cloaked with the orchid, girt with azalea, culling the perfume of sweet flowers to leave behind a memory in the heart. But dark is the grove wherein I dwell. No light of day reaches it ever. The path thither is dangerous and difficult to climb. Alone I stand on the hilltop, while the clouds float beneath my feet, and all around is wrapped in gloom.

"Gently blows the east wind; softly falls the rain. In my joy I become oblivious of home; for who in my decline would honour me now?

"I pluck the larkspur on the hillside, amid the chaos of rock and tangled vine. I hate him who has made me an outcast, who has now no leisure to think of me.

"I drink from the rocky spring. I shade myself beneath the spreading pine. Even though he were to recall me to him, I could not fall to the level of the world.

"Now booms the thunder through the drizzling rain. The gibbons howl around me all the long night. The gale rushes fitfully through the whispering trees. And I am thinking of my Prince, but in vain; for I cannot lay my grief."

*H. A. Giles.*

F R O M T H E S H I - K I N G

*Ode*

"Sons shall be born to him:—  
They will be put to sleep on couches;

They will be clothed in robes;  
They will have sceptres to play with;  
They will be resplendent with red knee-covers,  
Their cry will be loud.  
The future princes of the land.

“Daughters shall be born to him:—  
They will be put to sleep on the ground;  
They will be clothed with wrappers;  
They will have tiles to play with.  
It will be theirs neither to do wrong nor to do good.  
Only about the spirits and the food will they have to think,  
And to cause no sorrow to their parents.”

H. A. Giles.

O U - Y A N G H S I U

(1007-1072 A.D.)

*An Autumn Dirge*

“One night I had just sat down to my books, when suddenly I heard a sound far away towards the south-west. Listening intently, I wondered what it could be. On it came, at first like the sighing of a gentle zephyr . . . gradually deepening into theplash of waves upon a surf-beat shore . . . the roaring of huge breakers in the startled night, amid howling storm-gusts of wind and rain. It burst upon the hanging bell, and set every one of its pendants tinkling into tune. It seemed like the muffled march of soldiers, hurriedly advancing, bit in mouth, to the attack, when no shouted orders rend the air, but only the tramp of men and horses meet the ear.

“‘Boy,’ said I, ‘what noise is that? Go forth and see.’ ‘Sir,’ replied the boy on his return, ‘the moon and stars are brightly shining: the Silver River spans the sky. No sound of man is heard without: ’tis but the whispering of the trees.’

“‘Alas!’ I cried, ‘autumn is upon us. And is it thus, O boy, that autumn comes?—autumn, the cruel and the cold; autumn, the season of rack and mist; autumn, the season of cloudless skies; autumn, the season of piercing blasts; autumn, the season of desolation and

blight! Chill is the sound that heralds its approach, and then it leaps upon us with a shout. All the rich luxuriance of green is changed, all the proud foliage of the forest swept down to earth, withered beneath the icy breath of the destroyer. For autumn is nature's chief executioner, and its symbol is darkness. It has the temper of steel, and its symbol is a sharp sword. It is the avenging angel, riding upon an atmosphere of death. As spring is the epoch of growth, so autumn is the epoch of maturity. And sad is the hour when maturity is passed, for that which passes its prime must die.

"Still, what is this to plants and trees, which fade away in their due season? . . . But stay; there is man, man the divinest of all things. A hundred cares wreck his heart, countless anxieties trace their wrinkles on his brow, until his inmost self is bowed beneath the burden of life. And swifter still he hurries to decay when vainly striving to attain the unattainable, or grieving over his ignorance of that which can never be known. Then comes the whitening hair—and why not? Has man an adamantine frame, that he should outlast the trees of the field? Yet, after all, who is it, save himself, that steals his strength away? Tell me, O boy, what right has man to accuse his autumn blast?"

"My boy made no answer. He was fast asleep. No sound reached me save that of the cricket chirping its response to my dirge."

*H. A. Giles.*

S S U - K ' U N G T ' U

(A.D. 834-908)

### *Taoism\**

#### i.—ENERGY—ABSOLUTE

"Expenditure of force leads to outward decay,  
Spiritual existence means inward fulness.

Let us revert to Nothing and enter the Absolute,  
Hoarding up strength for Energy.  
Freighted with eternal principles,

\* A native philosophy founded by Lao Tzü B.C. 604, the antithesis of Confucianism.

Athwart the mighty void,  
Where cloud-masses darken,  
And the wind blows ceaseless around,  
Beyond the range of conceptions,  
Let us gain the Centre,  
And there hold fast without violence,  
Fed from an inexhaustible supply.”

#### ii.—TRANQUIL REPOSE

“It dwells in quietude, speechless,  
Imperceptible in the cosmos,  
Watered by the eternal harmonies,  
Soaring with the lonely crane.  
It is like a gentle breeze in spring,  
Softly bellying the flowing robe;  
It is like the note of the bamboo flute,  
Whose sweetness we would fain make our own.  
Meeting by chance, it seems easy of access,  
Seeking, we find it hard to secure.  
Ever shifting in semblance,  
It shifts from the grasp and is gone.”

#### iii.—SLIM—STOUT

“Gathering the water-plants  
From the wild luxuriance of spring,  
Away in the depth of a wild valley  
Anon I see a lovely girl.  
With the green leaves the peach-trees are loaded,  
The breeze blows gently along the stream,  
Willows shade the winding path,  
Darting orioles collect in groups.  
Eagerly I press forward  
As the reality grows upon me. . . .  
'Tis the eternal theme  
Which, though old, is ever new.”

#### iv.—CONCENTRATION

“Green pines and a rustic hut,  
The sun sinking through pure air,

I take off my cap and stroll alone,  
Listening to the song of birds.  
No wild geese fly hither,  
And she is far away;  
But my thoughts make her present  
As in the days gone by.  
Across the water dark clouds are whirled,  
Beneath the moonbeams the eyots stand revealed,  
And sweet words are exchanged  
Though the great River rolls between.”

#### v.—HEIGHT—ANTIQUITY

“Lo the Immortal, borne by spirituality,  
His hand grasping a lotus flower,  
Away to Time everlasting,  
Trackless through the regions of Space!  
With the moon he issues from the Ladle,\*  
Speeding upon a favourable gale;  
Below, Mount Hua looms dark,  
And from it sounds a clear-toned bell.  
Vacantly I gaze after his vanished image,  
Now passed beyond the bounds of mortality. . . .  
Ah, the Yellow Emperor and Yao,  
They, peerless, are his models.”

#### vi.—REFINEMENT

“A jade kettle with a purchase of spring,†  
A shower on the thatched hut  
Wherein sits a gentle scholar,  
With tall bamboos growing right and left,  
And white clouds in the newly-clear sky,  
And birds flitting in the depths of trees.  
Then pillow'd on his lute in the green shade,  
A waterfall tumbling overhead,  
Leaves dropping, not a word spoken,  
The man placid, like a chrysanthemum,  
Noting down the flower-glory of the season,—  
A book well worthy to be read.”

\* The Great Bear.

† Wine, which makes man see spring at all seasons.

vii.—WASH—SMELT

“As iron from the mines,  
As silver from lead,  
So purify thy heart,  
Loving the limpid and clean.  
Like a clear pool in spring,  
With its wondrous mirrored shapes,  
So make for the spotless and true,  
And, riding the moonbeam, revert to the Spiritual.  
Let your gaze be upon the stars of heaven,\*  
Let your song be of the hiding hermit;  
Like flowing water is our to-day,  
Our yesterday, the bright moon.” †

viii.—STRENGTH

“The mind as though in the void,  
The vitality as though of the rainbow,  
Among the thousand-ell peaks of Wu,  
Flying with the clouds, racing with the wind,  
Drink of the spiritual, feed on force,  
Store them for daily use, guard them in your heart,  
Be like Him in His might, ‡  
For this is to preserve your energy;  
Be a peer of Heaven and Earth,  
A co-worker in Divine transformation. . . .  
Seek to be full of these,  
And hold fast to them alway.”

ix.—EMBROIDERIES

“If the mind has wealth and rank,  
One may make light of yellow gold.  
Rich pleasures pall ere long,  
Simple joys deepen ever.

\* Emblems of purity.

† Our previous state of existence at the eternal Centre to which the moon belongs.

‡ The Power who, without loss of force, causes things to be what they are—God.

A mist-cloud hanging on the river bank,  
Pink almond-flowers along the bough,  
A flower-girt cottage beneath the moon,  
A painted bridge half seen in shadow,  
A golden goblet brimming with wine,  
A friend with his hand on the lute. . . .  
Take these and be content;  
They will swell thy heart beneath thy robe.”

#### x.—THE NATURAL

“Stoop, and there it is;  
Seek it not right and left.  
All roads lead thither,—  
One touch and you have spring! \*  
As though coming upon opening flowers,  
As though gazing upon the new year,  
Verily I will not snatch it,  
Forced, it will dwindle away.  
I will be like the hermit on the hill,  
Like duckweed gathered on the stream, †  
And when emotions crowd upon me,  
I will leave them to the harmonies of heaven.”

#### xi.—SET FREE

“Joying in flowers without let,  
Breathing the empyrean,  
Through TAO reverting to ether,  
And there to be wildly free,  
Wide-spreading as the wind of heaven,  
Lofty as the peaks of ocean,  
Filled with a spiritual strength,  
All creation by my side,  
Before me the sun, moon, and stars,  
The phoenix following behind.  
In the morning I whip up my leviathans  
And wash my feet in Fusang.” ‡

\* Alluding to the art of the painter.

† A creature of chance, following the doctrine of Inaction.

‡ Variously identified with Saghalien, Mexico, and Japan.

## xii.—CONSERVATION

“Without a word writ down,  
All wit may be attained.  
If words do not affect the speaker,  
They seem inadequate to sorrow.  
Herein is the First Cause,  
With which we sink or rise,  
As wine in the strainer mounts high,  
As cold turns back the season of flowers.  
The wide-spreading dust-motes in the air,  
The sudden spray-bubbles of ocean,  
Shallow, deep, collected, scattered,—  
You grasp ten thousand, and secure one.”

## xiii.—ANIMAL SPIRITS

“That they might come back unceasingly,  
That they might be ever with us!—  
The bright river, unfathomable,  
The rare flower just opening,  
The parrot of the verdant spring,  
The willow-trees, the terrace,  
The stranger from the dark hills,  
The cup overflowing with clear wine. . . .  
Oh, for life to be extended,  
With no dead ashes of writing,  
Amid the charms of the Natural,—  
Ah, who can compass it?”

## xiv.—CLOSE WOVEN

“In all things there are veritable atoms,  
Though the senses cannot perceive them,  
Struggling to emerge into shape  
From the wondrous workmanship of God.  
Water flowing, flowers budding,  
The limpid dew evaporating,  
An important road, stretching far,  
A dark path where progress is slow. . . .  
So words should not shock,  
Nor thought be inept.

But be like the green of spring,  
Like the snow beneath the moon.” \*

#### xv.—SECLUSION

“Following our own bent,  
Enjoying the Natural, free from curb,  
Rich with what comes to hand,  
Hoping some day to be with God.  
To build a hut beneath the pines,  
With uncovered head to pore over poetry,  
Knowing only morning and eve,  
But not what season it may be. . . .  
Then, if happiness is ours,  
Why must there be action?  
If of our own selves we can reach this point,  
Can we not be said to have attained?”

#### xvi.—FASCINATION

“Lovely is the pine-grove,  
With the stream eddying below,  
A clear sky and a snow-clad bank,  
Fishing-boats in the reach beyond.  
And she, like unto jade,  
Slowly sauntering, as I follow through the dark wood,  
Now moving on, now stopping short,  
Far away to the deep valley. . . .  
My mind quits its tenement, and is in the past,  
Vague, and not to be recalled,  
As though before the glow of the rising moon,  
As though before the glory of autumn.”

#### xvii.—IN TORTUOUS WAYS

“I climbed the T’ai-hsing mountain  
By the green winding path,  
Vegetation like a sea of jade,  
Flower-scent borne far and wide.  
Struggling with effort to advance,  
A sound escaped my lips,

\* Each invisible atom of which combines to produce a perfect whole. [ 60 ]

Which seemed to be back ere 'twas gone,  
As though hidden but not concealed.  
The eddying waters rush to and fro,  
Overhead the great rukh soars and sails;  
TAO does not limit itself to a shape,  
But is round and square by turns.”

#### xviii.—ACTUALITIES

“Choosing plain words  
To express simple thoughts,  
Suddenly I happened upon a recluse,  
And seemed to see the heart of TAO.  
Beside the winding brook,  
Beneath dark pine-trees’ shade,  
There was one stranger bearing a faggot,  
Another listening to the lute.  
And so, where my fancy led me,  
Better than if I had sought it,  
I heard the music of heaven,  
Astounded by its rare strains.”

#### xix.—DESPONDENT

“A gale ruffles the stream  
And trees in the forest crack;  
My thoughts are bitter as death,  
For she whom I asked will not come.  
A hundred years slip by like water,  
Riches and rank are but cold ashes,  
TAO is daily passing away,  
To whom shall we turn for salvation?  
The brave soldier draws his sword,  
And tears flow with endless lamentation;  
The wind whistles, leaves fall,  
And rain trickles through the old thatch.”

#### xx.—FORM AND FEATURE

“After gazing fixedly upon expression and substance  
The mind returns with a spiritual image,

As when seeking the outlines of waves,  
As when painting the glory of spring.  
The changing shapes of wind-swept clouds,  
The energies of flowers and plants,  
The rolling breakers of ocean,  
The crags and cliffs of mountains,  
All these are like mighty TAO,  
Skilfully woven into earthly surroundings. . . .  
To obtain likeness without form,  
Is not that to possess the man?"

#### xxi.—THE TRANSCENDENTAL

"Not of the spirituality of the mind,  
Nor yet of the atoms of the cosmos,  
But as though reached upon white clouds,  
Borne thither by pellucid breezes.  
Afar, it seems at hand,  
Approach, 'tis no longer there;  
Sharing the nature of TAO,  
It shuns the limits of mortality.  
It is in the piled-up hills, in tall trees,  
In dark mosses, in sunlight rays. . . .  
Croon over it, think upon it;  
Its faint sound eludes the ear."

#### xxii.—ABSTRACTION

"Without friends, longing to be there,  
Alone, away from the common herd,  
Like the crane on Mount Hou,  
Like the cloud at the peak of Mount Hua.  
In the portrait of the hero  
The old fire still lingers;  
The leaf carried by the wind  
Floats on the boundless sea.  
It would seem as though not to be grasped,  
But always on the point of being disclosed.  
Those who recognise this have already attained;  
Those who hope, drift daily farther away."

xxiii.—ILLUMINED

“Life stretches to one hundred years,  
And yet how brief a span;  
Its joys so fleeting,  
Its griefs so many!  
What has it like a goblet of wine,  
And daily visits to the wistaria arbour,  
Where flowers cluster around the eaves,  
And light showers pass overhead?  
Then when the wine-cup is drained,  
To stroll about with staff of thorn;  
For who of us but will some day be an ancient? . . .  
Ah, there is the South Mountain in its grandeur!”\*

xxiv.—MOTION

“Like a whirling water-wheel,  
Like rolling pearls,—  
Yet how are these worthy to be named?  
They are but illustrations for fools.  
There is the mighty axis of Earth,  
The never-resting pole of Heaven;  
Let us grasp their clue,  
And with them be blended in One,  
Beyond the bounds of thought,  
Circling for ever in the great Void,  
An orbit of a thousand years,—  
Yes, this is the key to my theme.”

*H. A. Giles.*

[See Note 6.]

\* This remains, while all other things pass away.

P O C H Ü - I \*

(717—)

*The Lute Girl*

The following is Po Chü-i's own preface to his poem:—

When, after ten years of regular service, I was wrongfully dismissed from the Prefecture of the Nine Rivers and the Mastership of the Horse, in the bright autumn of the year I was sent away to Ko-pen Creek's mouth. It was there that I heard, seated in my boat at midnight, the faint tones of a lute. It seemed as though I was listening to the tones of the gongs in the Palace of the Capital. On asking an old man, I learnt that it was the performance of a woman who for many years had cultivated the two talents of music and singing to good effect. In the course of time her beauty faded, she humbled her pride, and followed her fate by becoming a merchant's wife.

• • • • •  
The wine ran out and the songs ceased. My grief was such that I made a few short poems to set to music for singing.  
• • • • •

But now perturbed, engulfed, distressed, worn out, I move about the river and lake at my leisure. I have been out of office for two years, but the effect of this man's words is such as to produce a peaceful influence within me.

This evening I feel that I have dismissed all the reproachful thoughts I harboured, and in consequence have made a long poem which I intend to present to the court.

By night, beside the river, underneath  
The flower-like maple leaves that bloom alone  
In autumn's silent revels of decay,  
We said farewell. The host, dismounting, sped

\* [See Note 7.]

The parting guest whose boat rocked under him,  
And when the circling stirrup-cup went round,  
No light guitar, no lute, was heard again;  
But on the heart aglow with wine there fell  
Beneath the cold bright moon the cold adieu  
Of fading friends—when suddenly beyond  
The cradled waters stole the lullaby  
Of some faint lute; then host forgot to go,  
Guest lingered on: all, wondering at the spell,  
Besought the dim enchantress to reveal  
Her presence; but the music died and gave  
No answer, dying. Then a boat shot forth  
To bring the shy musician to the shore.  
Cups were refilled and lanterns trimmed again,  
And so the festival went on. At last,  
Slow yielding to their prayers, the stranger came,  
Hiding her burning face behind her lute;  
And twice her hand essayed the strings, and twice  
She faltered in her task; then tenderly,  
As for an old sad tale of hopeless years,  
With drooping head and fingers deft she poured  
Her soul forth into melodies. Now slow  
The plectrum led to prayer the cloistered chords,  
Now loudly with the crash of falling rain,  
Now soft as the leaf whispering of words,  
Now loud and soft together as the long  
Patter of pearls and seed-pearls on a dish  
Of marble; liquid now as from the bush  
Warbles the mango bird; meandering  
Now as the streamlet seawards; voiceless now  
As the wild torrent in the strangling arms  
Of her ice-lover, lying motionless,  
Lulled in a passion far too deep for sound.  
Then as the water from the broken vase  
Gushes, or on the mailèd horseman falls  
The anvil din of steel, as on the silk  
The slash of rending, so upon the strings  
Her plectrum fell. . . .

Then silence over us.

No sound broke the charmed air. The autumn moon

Swam silver o'er the tide, as with a sigh  
The stranger stirred to go.

“I passed,” said she,  
“My childhood in the capital; my home  
Was near the hills. A girl of twelve, I learnt  
The magic of the lute, the passionate  
Blending of lute and voice that drew the souls  
Of the great masters to acknowledgment;  
And lovely women, envious of my face,  
Bowed at the shrine in secret. The young lords  
Vied for a look’s approval. One brief song  
Brought many costly bales. Gold ornaments  
And silver pins were smashed and trodden down,  
And blood-red silken skirts were stained with wine  
In oft-times echoing applause. And so  
I laughed my life away from year to year  
While the spring breezes and the autumn moon  
Caressed my careless head. Then on a day  
My brother sought the battles in Kansuh;  
My mother died: nights passed and mornings came,  
And with them waned my beauty. Now no more  
My doors were thronged; few were the cavaliers  
That lingered by my side; so I became  
A trader’s wife, the chattel of a slave  
Whose lord was gold, who, parting, little recked  
Of separation and the unhonoured bride.  
Since the tenth moon was full my husband went  
To where the tea-fields ripen. I remained,  
To wander in my little lonely boat  
Over the cold bright wave o’ nights, and dream  
Of the dead days, the haze of happy days,  
And see them set again in dreams and tears.”

• • • •  
Already the sweet sorrows of her lute  
Had moved my soul to pity; now these words  
Pierced my heart. “O lady fair,” I cried,  
“We are the vagrants of the world, and need  
No ceremony to be friends. Last year  
I left the Imperial City, banished far  
To this plague-stricken spot, where desolation

Broods on from year to heavy year, nor lute  
Nor love's guitar is heard. By marshy bank  
Girt with tall yellow reeds and dwarf bamboos  
I dwell. Night long and day no stir, no sound,  
Only the lurking cuckoo's blood-stained note,  
The gibbon's mournful wail. Hill songs I have,  
And village pipes with their discordant twang.  
But now I listen to thy lute methinks  
The gods were parents to thy music. Sit  
And sing to us again, while I engrave  
Thy story on my tablets!" Gratefully  
(For long she had been standing) the lute girl  
Sat down and passed into another song,  
Sad and so soft, a dream, unlike the song  
Of now ago. Then all her hearers wept  
In sorrow unrestrained; and I the more,  
Weeping until the pale chrysanthemums  
Upon my darkened robe were starred with dew.

L. Cranmer-Byng.

#### FROM THE SHI-KING

##### *A Wife's Memories*

With taper rod of tall bamboo  
You angle in the K'e,  
Do I not go by dream to you  
Who cannot come to me?

To left the Ts'euен waters roam,  
The K'e flows on to right,  
Ah! never gleams the newer home  
Like that lost home to sight.

Leftward the Ts'euен stream beguiles,  
And rightward calls the K'e,  
Return, O light of happy smiles  
And girdle-gems, to me!

The oars of cedar rise and fall  
From boats of yellow pine,  
Would I might roam the banks where all  
The ghosts of girlhood shine!

L. Cranmer-Byng.

## P O C H Ü - I

### *The Island of Pines*

Across the willow-lake a temple shines,  
Pale, through the lotus-girdled isle of pines,  
And twilight listens to the drip of oars—  
The coming of dark boats with scented stores  
Of orange seed; the mist leans from the hill,  
While palm leaves sway 'twixt wind and water chill,  
And waves of smoke like phantoms rise and fade  
Into a trembling tangle of green jade.  
I dream strange dreams within my tower room,  
Dreams from the glimmering realms of even gloom  
Until each princely guest doth, landing, raise  
His eyes, upon the full-orbed moon to gaze—  
The old moon-palace that in ocean stands  
Mid clouds of thistle-down and jewelled strands.

L. Cranmer-Byng.

### *Springtide*

The lonely convent on the hill  
Draws merchants faring from the west;  
Almost upon the waters still  
The quiet clouds lean down and rest.  
In green pavilions of warm trees  
The golden builders toil and sing;  
While swallows dip along the leas,  
And dabble in the ooze of Spring.

A thousand flowers, a thousand dreams,  
Bright pageants in confusion pass.  
See yonder, where the white horse gleams  
His fetlocks deep in pliant grass.

Beside the eastern lake there calls  
No laughing throng, no lover goes;  
But in the long embankment walls  
The willow shade invites repose.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

L I H U A

(CIRCA A.D. 850)

*An Old Battle-Field*

Vast, vast—an endless wilderness of sand;  
A stream crawls through its tawny banks; the hills  
Encompass it; where in the dismal dusk  
Moan the last sighs of sunset. Shrubs are gone,  
Withered the grass; all chill as the white rime  
Of early morn. The birds go soaring past,  
The beasts avoid it; for the legend runs—  
Told by the crook'd custodian of the place—  
Of some old battle-field. "Here many a time,"  
He quavered, "armies have been overwhelmed,  
And the faint voices of the unresting dead  
Often upon the darkness of the night  
Go wailing by."

O sorrow! O ye Ch'ins!

Ye Hans! ye dynasties for ever flown!  
Ye empires of the dust! for I have heard  
How, when the Ch'is and Weis embattled rose  
Along the frontier, when the Chings and Hans  
Gathered their multitudes, a myriad leagues  
Of utter weariness they trod. By day  
Grazing their jaded steeds, by night they ford  
The hostile stream. The endless earth below,  
The boundless sky above, they know no day

Of their return. Their breasts are ever bared  
To the pitiless steel and all the wounds of war  
Unspeakable.

Methinks I see them now,  
Dust-mantled in the bitter wind, a host  
Of Tartar warriors in ambuscade.  
Our leader scorns the foe. He would give battle  
Upon the threshold of the camp. The stream  
Besets a grim array where order reigns,  
Though many hearts may beat, where discipline  
Is all, and life of no account.

The spear  
Now works its iron will, the startled sand  
Blinding the combatants together locked  
In the death-grip; while hill and vale and stream  
Glow with the flash and crash of arms. Then cold  
The shades of night o'erwhelm them; to the knee  
In snow, beards stiff with ice. The carrion bird  
Hath sought its nest. The war-horse in its strength  
Is broken. Clothes avail not. Hands are dead,  
Flesh to the frost succumbs. Nature herself  
Doth aid the Tartar with a deadly blast  
Following the wild onslaught. Wagons block  
The way. Our men, beset with flank attacks,  
Surrender with their officers. Their chief  
Is slain. The river to its topmost banks  
Swollen with death; the dykes of the Great Wall  
Brimming with blood. Nation and rank are lost  
In that vast-heaped corruption.

Faintly now,  
And fainter beats the drum; for strength is shorn,  
And arrows spent, and bow-strings snapped, and swords  
Shattered. The legions fall on one another  
In the last surge of life and death. To yield  
Is to become a slave; to fight is but  
To mingle with the desert sands.

. . . . . No sound  
Of bird now flutters from the hushed hillside;  
All, all is still, save for the wind that wails  
And whistles through the long night where the ghosts

Hither and thither in the gloom go by,  
And spirits from the nether world arise  
Under the ominous clouds. The sunlight pales  
Athwart the trampled grass; the fading moon  
Still twinkles on the frost-flakes scattered round.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

S S U - K ' U N G T ' U

(A.D. 834-908)

### *The Poet's Vision*

Wine that recalls the glow of spring,  
Upon the thatch a sudden shower,  
A gentle scholar in the bower,  
Where tall bamboos their shadows fling,  
White clouds in heavens newly clear,  
And wandering wings through depths of trees,  
Then pillow'd in green shade, he sees  
A torrent foaming to the mere;  
Around his dreams the dead leaves fall;  
Calm as the starred chrysanthemum,  
He notes the season glories come,  
And reads the books that never pall.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *Despondent*

A gale goes ruffling down the stream,  
The giants of the forest crack;  
My thoughts are bitter—black as death—  
For she, my summer, comes not back.

A hundred years like water glide,  
Riches and rank are ashen cold,  
Daily the dream of peace recedes:  
By whom shall Sorrow be consoled?

[See Note 8.]

The soldier, dauntless, draws his sword,  
And there are tears and endless pain;  
The winds arise, leaves flutter down,  
And through the old thatch drips the rain.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *Embroideries*

If rank and wealth within the mind abide,  
Then gilded dust is all your yellow gold.  
Kings in their fretted palaces grow old;  
Youth dwells for ever at Contentment's side.  
A mist cloud hanging at the river's brim,  
Pink almond flowers along the purple bough,  
A hut rose-girdled under moon-swept skies,  
A painted bridge half-seen in shadows dim,—  
These are the splendours of the poor, and thou,  
O wine of spring, the vintage of the wise.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *Concentration*

A hut green-shadowed among firs,—  
A sun that slopes in amber air,—  
Lone wandering, my head I bare,  
While some far thrush the silence stirs.

No flocks of wild geese thither fly,  
And she—ah! she is far away;  
Yet all my thoughts behold her stay,  
As in the golden hours gone by.

The clouds scarce dim the water's sheen,  
The moon-bathed islands wanly show,  
And sweet words falter to and fro—  
Though the great River rolls between.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *Motion*

Like a water-wheel awhirl,  
Like the rolling of a pearl;  
Yet these but illustrate,  
To fools, the final state.

The earth's great axis spinning on,  
The never-resting pole of sky—  
Let us resolve their Whence and Why,  
And blend with all things into One;  
Beyond the bounds of thought and dream,  
Circling the vasty void as spheres  
Whose orbits round a thousand years:  
Behold the Key that fits my theme.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### O U - Y A N G H S I U O F L U - L I N G

(A.D. 1007-1072)

#### *Autumn*

One night, when dreaming over ancient books,  
There came to me a sudden far-off sound  
From the south-west. I listened, wondering,  
As on it crept: at first a gentle sigh,  
Like as a spirit passing; then it swelled  
Into the roaring of great waves that smite  
The broken vanguard of the cliff: the rage  
Of storm-black tigers in the startled night  
Among the jackals of the wind and rain.  
It burst upon the hanging bell, and set  
The silver pendants chattering. It seemed  
A muffled march of soldiers hurriedly  
Sped to the night attack with muffled mouths,  
When no command is heard, only the tramp  
Of men and horses onward. "Boy," said I,  
"What sound is that? Go forth and see." My boy,  
Returning, answered, "Lord! the moon and all

[See Note 9.]

Her stars shine fair; the silver river spans  
The sky. No sound of man is heard without;  
'Tis but a whisper of the trees." "Alas!"  
I cried, "then Autumn is upon us now.  
'Tis thus, O boy, that Autumn comes, the cold  
Pitiless Autumn of the wrack and mist,  
Autumn, the season of the cloudless sky,  
Autumn, of biting blasts, the time of blight  
And desolation; following the chill  
Stir of disaster, with a shout it leaps  
Upon us. All the gorgeous pageantry  
Of green is changed. All the proud foliage  
Of the crested forests is shorn, and shrivels down  
Beneath the blade of ice. For this is Autumn,  
Nature's chief executioner. It takes  
The darkness for a symbol. It assumes  
The temper of proven steel. Its symbol is  
A sharpened sword. The avenging fiend, it rides  
Upon an atmosphere of death. As Spring,  
Mother of many-coloured birth, doth rear  
The young light-hearted world, so Autumn drains  
The nectar of the world's maturity.  
And sad the hour when all ripe things must pass,  
For sweetness and decay are of one stem,  
And sweetness ever riots to decay.  
Still, what availeth it? The trees will fall  
In their due season. Sorrow cannot keep  
The plants from fading. Stay! there yet is man—  
Man, the divinest of all things, whose heart  
Hath known the shipwreck of a thousand hopes,  
Who bears a hundred wrinkled tragedies  
Upon the parchment of his brow, whose soul  
Strange cares have lined and interlined, until  
Beneath the burden of life his inmost self  
Bows down. And swifter still he seeks decay  
When groping for the unattainable  
Or grieving over continents unknown.  
Then come the snows of time. Are they not due?  
Is man of adamant he should outlast  
The giants of the grove? Yet after all

Who is it saps his strength save man alone?  
Tell me, O boy, by what imagined right  
Man doth accuse his Autumn blast?" My boy  
Slumbered and answered not. The cricket gave  
The only answer to my song of death.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

L I P O

*To the City of Nan-King*

Thou that hast seen six kingdoms pass away,  
Accept my song and these three cups I drain!  
There may be fairer gardens light the plain;  
Thine are the dim blue hills more fair than they.

Here Kings of Wu were crowned and overthrown,  
Where peaceful grass along the ruin wins;  
Here—was it yesterday?—the royal Tsins  
Called down the dreams of sunset into stone.

One end awaits for all that mortal be;  
Pride and despair shall find a common grave:  
The Yang-tse-kiang renders wave and wave  
To mingle with the abyssms of the sea.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

(See Notes 10, 11.)

*Memories with the Dusk Return*

The yellow dusk winds round the city wall:  
The crows are drawn to nest,  
Silently down the west  
They hasten home, and from the branches call.  
A woman sits and weaves with fingers deft  
Her story of the flower-lit stream,  
Threading the jasper gauze in dream,

Till like faint smoke it dies; and she, bereft,  
Recalls the parting words that died  
Under the casement some far eventide,  
And stays the disappointed loom,  
While from the little lonely room  
Into the lonely night she peers,  
And, like the rain, unheeded fall her tears.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *An Emperor's Love*

In all the clouds he sees her light robes trail,  
And roses seem beholden to her face;  
O'er scented balustrade the scented gale  
Blows warm from Spring, and dew-drops form apace.  
Her outline on the mountain he can trace,  
Now leans she from the tower in moonlight pale.

A flower-girt branch grows sweeter from the dew.  
The spirit of snow and rain unheeded calls.  
Who wakes to memory in these palace walls?  
Fei-yen! \*—but in the robes an Empress knew.

The most renowned of blossoms, most divine  
Of those whose conquering glances overthrow  
Cities and kingdoms, for his sake combine  
And win the ready smiles that ever flow  
From royal lips. What matter if the snow  
Blot out the garden? She shall still recline  
Upon the scented balustrade and glow  
With spring that thrills her warm blood into wine.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *On the Banks of Jo-eh*

They gather lilies down the stream,  
A net of willows drooping low

\* A delicate compliment to the beautiful T'ai-Chên, of which the meaning is that, as the Emperor Yang-ti of the Sui dynasty elevated his mistress Fei-yen to share with him the throne, so shall T'ai-Chên become the Empress of Ming-Huang.

Hides boat from boat; and to and fro  
Sweet whispered confidences seem  
'Mid laughing trills to flow.

In the green deeps a shaft of gold  
Limns their elaborate attire;  
Through silken sleeves the winds aspire,  
Embalmed, to stray, and, growing bold,  
Swell them to their desire.

But who are these, the cavaliers  
That gleam along the river-side?  
By three, by five they prance with pride  
Beyond the willow-line that sheers  
Over the trellised tide.

A charger neighs; one turns to start,  
Crushing the kingcups as he flies,  
And one pale maiden vainly tries  
To hush the tumult in her heart  
And veil the secret of her eyes.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *Thoughts in a Tranquil Night*

Athwart the bed  
I watch the moonbeams cast a trail  
So bright, so cold, so frail,  
That for a space it gleams  
Like hoar-frost on the margin of my dreams.

I raise my head,—  
The splendid moon I see:  
Then droop my head,  
And sink to dreams of thee—  
My Fatherland, of thee!

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

## *The Guild of Good-Fellowship*

The universe is but a tenement  
Of all things visible. Darkness and day  
The passing guests of Time. Life slips away,  
A dream of little joy and mean content.

Ah! wise the old philosophers who sought  
To lengthen their long sunsets among flowers,  
By stealing the young night's unsullied hours  
And the dim moments with sweet burdens fraught.

And now Spring beckons me with verdant hand,  
And Nature's wealth of eloquence doth win  
Forth to the fragrant-bowered nectarine,  
Where my dear friends abide, a careless band.

There meet my gentle, matchless brothers, there  
I come, the obscure poet, all unfit  
To wear the radiant jewellery of wit,  
And in their golden presence cloud the air.

And while the thrill of meeting lingers, soon  
As the first courtly words, the feast is spread,  
While, couched on flowers 'mid wine-cups flashing red,  
We drink deep draughts unto The Lady Moon.

Then as without the touch of verse divine  
There is no outlet for the pent-up soul,  
'Twas ruled that he who quaffed no fancy's bowl  
Should drain the "Golden Valley" \* cups of wine.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

## *Under the Moon*

Under the crescent moon's faint glow  
The washerman's bat resounds afar,

\* *I.e.*, drink three cups of wine, the "Golden Valley" being the name of a garden, the owner of which enforced this penalty among his boon companions (*Gems of Chinese Literature*, p. 113).

And the Autumn breeze sighs tenderly.  
But my heart has gone to the Tartar war,  
To bleak Kansuh and the steppes of snow,  
Calling my husband back to me.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *Drifting*

We cannot keep the gold of yesterday;  
To-day's dun clouds we cannot roll away.  
Now the long, wailing flight of geese brings Autumn in its train,  
So to the view-tower cup in hand to fill and drink again,  
  
And dream of the great singers of the past,  
Their fadeless lines of fire and beauty cast.  
I too have felt the wild-bird thrill of song behind the bars,  
But these have brushed the world aside and walked amid the stars.  
  
In vain we cleave the torrent's thread with steel,  
In vain we drink to drown the grief we feel;  
When man's desire with fate doth war this, this avails alone—  
To hoist the sail and let the gale and the waters bear us on.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### T U F U

(A.D. 712-770)

### *A Night of Song*

The wind scarce flutters through the leaves,  
The young moon hath already gone,  
And kind and cool the dews descend:  
The lute-strings wake for night alone.

In shadow lapse the twinkling streams,  
The liliéd marge their waves caress;  
And the sheer constellations sway  
O'er soundless gulfs of nothingness.

What cadence charms the poet's ear!  
What fire-fly fancies round him swarm!  
He dreads the lantern lights may fail  
Long ere his thoughts have taken form.

Now gallants tap their two-edged swords,  
And pride and passion swell amain;  
Like red stars flashing through the night  
The circling wine-cups brim again.

There steals the old sad air of Ou—  
Each calls his latest song to mind;  
Then white sails taper down the stream,  
While lingering thoughts still look behind.

L. Cranmer-Byng.

[See Note 14.]

### *The Recruiting Sergeant*

At sunset in the village of Che-Kao \*  
I sought for shelter; on my heels there trod  
A grim recruiting sergeant, of the kind  
That seize their prey by night. A poor old man  
Saw—scaled the wall, and vanished. Through the gate  
An old bent woman hobbled, and she marched  
A pace before him. Loudly in his wrath  
The grim recruiter stormed; and bitterly  
She answered: “Listen to the voice of her  
Who drags before you. Once I had three sons—  
Three in the Emperor’s camp. A letter came  
From one, and—there was one; the others fell  
In the same battle—he alone was left,  
Scarce able from the iron grasp of Death  
To tear his miserable life.

Alas

My two dead boys! for ever and for aye  
Death holds them. In our wretched hut remains  
The last of all the men—a little child,  
Still at his mother’s breast. She cannot flee  
Since her few tatters scarce suffice to clothe  
Her shrunken limbs.

My years are nearly done,  
My strength is well-nigh spent; yet I will go  
Readily to the camping-ground. Perchance

\* All words ending in *ao* are pronounced *ow*, as in English *vow*, *allow*, etc.

I may be useful for some humble task,  
To cook the rice or stir the morning meal."

Night slipped away. The clamour and the cries  
Died down; but there was weeping and the sound  
Of stifled moans around me.

At the break  
Of dawn I hurried on my road, and left  
None but an old and broken man behind.

L. Cranmer-Byng.

### *Chants of Autumn*

Shorn by the frost with crystal blade,  
The dry leaves, scattered, fall at last;  
Among the valleys of Wu Chan  
Cold winds of death go wailing past.  
Tumultuous waves of the great river rise  
And seem to storm the skies;  
While snow-bright peak and prairie mist combine,  
And greyness softens the harsh mountain line.  
Chrysanthemums unfurl to-day,  
To-morrow the last flowers are blown.  
I am the barque that chains delay:  
My homeward thoughts must sail alone.  
From house to house warm winter robes are spread,  
And through the pine-woods red  
Floats up the sound of the washerman's bat who plies  
His hurried task ere the brief noon wanes and dies.

L. Cranmer-Byng.

### MENG HAO-JAN

(A.D. 689-740)

### *The Lost One*

The red gleam o'er the mountains  
Goes wavering from sight,  
And the quiet moon enhances  
The loveliness of night.

I open wide my casement  
To breathe the rain-cooled air,  
And mingle with the moonlight  
The dark waves of my hair.

The night wind tells me secrets  
Of lotus lilies blue;  
And hour by hour the willows  
Shake down the chiming dew.

I fain would take the zither,  
By some stray fancy led;  
But there are none to hear me,  
And who can charm the dead?

So all my day-dreams follow  
The bird that leaves the nest;  
And in the night I gather  
The lost one to my breast.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *A Friend Expected*

Over the chain of giant peaks  
The great red sun goes down,  
And in the stealthy floods of night  
The distant valleys drown.

Yon moon that cleaves the gloomy pines  
Has freshness in her train;  
Low wind, faint stream, and waterfall  
Haunt me with their refrain.

The tired woodman seeks his cot  
That twinkles up the hill;  
And sleep has touched the wanderers  
That sang the twilight still.

To-night—ah! beauty of to-night  
I need my friend to praise,  
So take the lute to lure him on  
Through the fragrant, dew-lit ways.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### K A O - S H I H

#### *Desolation*

##### I

There was a King of Liang—a king of wondrous might—  
Who kept an open palace, where music charmed the night—

##### II

Since he was Lord of Liang a thousand years have flown,  
And of the towers he builded yon ruin stands alone.

##### III

There reigns a heavy silence; gaunt weeds through windows pry,  
And down the streets of Liang old echoes, wailing, die.

*L. Cranmer-Byng*

### S U N G C H I H - W È N

(*Died A.D. 710*)

#### *The Court of Dreams*

Fled swiftly with a tearing breeze;  
Rain from the mountains of Ki-Sho  
The sun came radiant down the west,  
And greener blushed the valley trees.

I entered through the convent gate:  
The abbot bade me welcome there,  
And in the court of silent dreams  
I lost the thread of worldly care.

That holy man and I were one,  
Beyond the bounds that words can trace:  
The very flowers were still as we.  
I heard the lark that hung in space,  
And Truth Eternal flashed on me.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

W A N G S E N G - J U  
(SIXTH CENTURY A.D.)

*Tears*

High o'er the hill the moon barque steers.  
The lantern lights depart.  
Dead springs are stirring in my heart;  
And there are tears. . . .  
But that which makes my grief more deep  
Is that you know not when I weep.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

Y U A N M E I

*A Feast of Lanterns*

In spring for sheer delight  
I set the lanterns swinging through the trees,  
Bright as the myriad argosies of night,  
That ride the clouded billows of the sky.  
Red dragons leap and plunge in gold and silver seas,  
And, O my garden gleaming cold and white,  
Thou hast outshone the far faint moon on high.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

*A Medley of Perfume*

Prone beside the western stream,  
In the lilded dusk I dream;

And mocking me the wind of spring  
Such medley of perfume doth bring,  
I cannot tell what fragrance blows,  
Nor guess the lotus from the rose.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

[See Note 12.]

### *Willow Flowers*

O willow flowers like flakes of snow,  
Where do your wandering legions go?  
Little we care, and less we know!  
Our ways are the ways of the wind;  
Our life in the whirl, and death in the drifts below.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *Illusion*

'Tis we that wail the hour of birth,  
'Tis others weep the hour we die.  
If I am sad, 'tis others sing;  
Should they lament, I will be feasting.  
All flows, all passes, like yon stream;  
Like yonder wind-wheel all revolves.  
We change the fire-drill, changing not the fire;  
New lamps or old, what matters it?  
'Tis laughable that all men flock in crowds  
To worship Buddhas and the Genii;  
Austerities mean cramp and weariness,  
And genuflections to the Rites a headache.  
'Tis but a tangle of marsh-lights after all,  
We cannot seize the shadow of the wind.  
What if the gods made answer to our prayers?  
With shouts of laughter I should drive the crowd.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *The Secret Land*

The flower fairies bring  
Their playmate Spring,

But the Spring goes  
And takes no rose.  
She breaks all hearts  
To incense and departs.

The river fain would keep  
One cloud upon its breast  
Of the twilight flocks that sweep  
Like red flamingoes fading west,  
Away, away,  
To build beyond the day.

Give me the green gloom of a lofty tree,  
Leaf and bough to shutter and bar  
My dream of the world that ought to be  
From the drifting ghosts of the things that are.

Mine is a secret land where Spring  
And sunset clouds cease wandering.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *In an Old Library*

Ten thousand tomes with pendant discs of jade,  
Bowls of old Shang with bronze of Chow displayed,  
And suddenly the small  
Tinkle of girdle gems floats through the hall,  
As though the wind custodian sings:—  
“I guard the fragrance of a thousand springs.  
Draw near! draw near!  
Ten thousand yesterdays are gathered here.”

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *A Challenge from the Moon*

The moon leans mirrored on the dark guitar,  
As though she fears its cadences unheard  
May lapse into the night. Oh! I am stirred  
By some rare tone afar  
Caught from the drifting Palaces of Cold,\*

\* The great Cold Palaces of the Moon that drift here and there in the moon-mists, once visited in a dream by the Emperor Ming-Huang.

Where pale musicians through the moon-mists peer,  
And challenged into song. Of waters rolled  
Seaward I sing. Now clear,  
Now muffled in the wreathèd haze, now fall  
My chords far strangled down the forest. All  
My cares are centred in the strings, and I forget  
That night and dawn on the long grey line have met.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *After the Rain*

In the Pavilion of Green Purity  
The green of the circling lawns is mirrored anew.  
Across the crystal frontiers \* that divide  
Are smiling flowers and raindrops glancing through.  
And lo, the strange blue void wells clear of the clouds  
Like a sky beyond a sky, with a blue beyond the blue.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *Home*

Surely there sings no lighter heart than mine beneath the sky!  
And now, companion of my nights of long moon-dreams, good-bye!  
For mine is the silver dragon car  
That hovers beyond the Rainbow Dome,†  
And it's oh to be galloping, galloping home  
Where my dream-born children are!

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

S U T U N G - P ' O

(A.D. 1036-1101)

### *At the Kuang-Li Pavilion*

Red-skirted ladies, robed for fairyland, all have flown,  
But my heart to the wail of their long reed-pipes lilts on:  
Their clarion songs 'mid the wandering clouds were blown,  
The tiny-waisted, dreamily-dancing girls are gone.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

\* The window-panes.

† The palace where Chang O, the Moon-goddess, dwells.

## *Farewell to Chao Tâ-Lin*

Long do I sorrow that the spring should end;  
Fain is the host to stay the parting friend.  
When for a while the dull routine is done,  
We statesmen idle in the sun.  
The kettle yields its stream of golden tea,  
And warm winds spread the odours of congee.  
Finished the cup, faded the crimson peach,  
Twilight, the green embankment levelled to the beach,  
My boat is poled along the shore and soon  
In the pure night unlanterned we recline;  
Until, caps off to conquering wine,  
We nod, the dream companions of the moon.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### A N O N Y M O U S

(*From the Sung Collection*)

#### *Riding by Moonlight*

From the tall hill-top some great star  
Falls to the west afar and afar.

Out of the glistening gorge below  
The orient moon swims full and slow.

Hair dishevelled and sleeves blown wide,  
Into the kind cool night I ride.

Faint winds free strange scents anew.  
Moon-paled maples bright with dew,

Dripping dreams from bough to bough  
Sigh to my lute, Why sleepest thou?

Hands on the waiting strings fall mute.  
Low my heart answers—"I am the lute."

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

O U - Y A N G H S I U

(A.D. 1007-1072)

*Return*

You far away—you know  
That when the wine-cup reddens o'er the lake  
I call to you a thousand leagues apart,  
From the sheer confines of the world, and lo,  
All golden for your sake,  
Spring dimples through the doorway of my heart.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

*At Forty-One*

The waters from the pool are vanishing;  
A mellow sunlight steeps the window-panes,  
And autumn winds ply many a pleasant fan.

O gold and green, half-ripe, the acacias glow,  
While o'er the threshold of his summer falls  
The shadow of a solitary man.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

*A Night on Lake T'ai*

Water and sky, as dusk folds down, together blend in a grey-green  
mist  
Clear silhouettes of the trees are limned on a sunset of rose and  
amethyst.  
Moon doth creep from the bed of the deep paling the storm-black  
waves afar;  
Through frosted rushes ripe oranges are gleaming golden star on  
star.  
I am void of cares and affairs, so happily drink and dream in peace.  
Loud and shrill may the reed-pipes trill; when they touch my heart  
they cease.

But my ten little painted ships to-night, where shall they anchored lie?

At the foot of the Tung-t'ing mountain, on the cold deep breast of lake T'ai.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *Songs of the Night*

#### I

In flowing crowds  
The moon-born clouds  
Cast their light shade  
O'er stairs of jade;  
And all the moonlit ways are one,  
Shining in silver unison.  
Yet who can read aright  
The mystery of night?

#### II

Spring-time, and sounds of the streaming waterfall;  
Deep night on shrunken hill-tops spreads her pall.  
The moon steers through a maze of pines, and lo,  
A thousand thrusting peaks are set aglow.

#### III

In the cold water the collected snow  
Melts, and the frozen stream begins to flow.  
The laughing girls slip homeward through the dark,  
While sand-birds wheel around the fisher's barque.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### P O C H U - I

#### *Myself*

What of myself?

I am like unto the sere chrysanthemum

[ 90 ]

That is shorn by the frost-blade, and, torn from its roots,  
Whirled away on the wind.

Once in the valleys of Ch'in and Yung I rambled at will,  
Now ring me round the unfriendly plains of the wild folk of Pa.  
O galloping dawns with Youth and Ambition riding knee to knee!  
Ride on, Youth, with the galloping dawns and dappled days!

I am unhorsed, outventured—

I, who crouch by the crumbling embers, old, and grey, and alone.  
One great hour of noon with the sky-faring Rukh  
I clanged on the golden dome of Heaven.

Now in the long dusk of adversity  
I have found my palace of contentment my dream pavilion;  
Even the tiny twig of the little humble wren.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### H A N Y Ü

#### *Disappointment*

Still moonlight floods the inner gallery,  
Where the japonica sets fluttering  
Her silvered petals. Languidly  
I rise, and let my absent glance  
Fall where the shadows of the swing  
Over the door-step dance.

I am possessed  
By spring's rough humid winds that penetrate  
The silken curtains of my lonely state,  
And cannot rest,  
For all my sorrow.  
During the night I hear the heavy rain  
Crash on the lotus pool afar.  
To-morrow! ah, to-morrow!  
The little boat lies swamped that I would fain  
Have steered in search of the golden nenuphar.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

[See Note 13.]

*Sailing Across Lake Mei-Pei*

Tsen-tsan and his brother delighted to dream in grand horizons,  
 They drew me down to the water's edge, their fellow wanderer.  
 Veiled was the sky and sombre the land, and sudden the change  
     from daylight,  
 The wind rose and the storm-waves seemed to be rolling pale gems  
     in the foam.

Our boat shot forth from its moorings and rippled into the move-  
     ment,  
 Great was the scene, inspiring to song, but the dominant note was  
     fear.  
 How should I not be stirred with danger surging around me?  
 Treacherous wind and crested wave, is there no escaping you?

Lo! now the captain unfurls the silken sail to the breezes  
 And the boatmen begin to rejoice as the last cloud flags away.  
 The wild-fowl rise with a roaring of wings, scared by the chant  
     of oarsmen;  
 Lute and flute are astir; faint harmonies drip from the sky.

Bright are the water lily's leaves as though the rains had burnished  
     them.  
 The slack line slips through my hands that would fathom the  
     soundless lake.  
 My gaze falls on the vast expanse of the limitless void before me,  
 Rearward menacing, dark, Chong-Nan towers out of sight.

Southward the mountains brood above the restless waters,  
 Their grim reflections, trembling, sink in deeps of darkening blue.  
 The sun sets, the boat glides by the cloud-pavilioned pagoda,  
 And soon the moon is mirrored in the dun dusk of the lake.

'Tis then the black dragon, breathing pearls, looms out of the dark-  
     ness.

'Tis then the river-god beats the drum, and the shoaling monsters rise.

The naiads leave their dim retreats, faintly their revels find us,  
And the pale streamers of their quickened lutes gleam for an instant far away.

L. Cranmer-Byng.

## L I P O

### *Spring Sadness*

The east wind has returned. The green of the grass renews and  
I know that spring is here.

Streams unbound awake into the dance of life.

Softly the weeping willow waves its long slim boughs.

What sorrow is there in its movement!

Light of the sky, most fair, most tender blue!

Air of the sea, sweet-scented, fresh, green-tinged!

Bright colours on the emerald, dreaming off into the distance in a half-seen veil—such was the earth.

The little clouds hover lightly in the heights, each melting into the more radiant beyond.

Headlong waters are gathered in headlong streams.

My glance falls on the moss by the river-bend. How delicate and swift its movements in the wind!

Gauze of the wandering threads whirled here and there, my spirit is minded to escape and whirl along with you.

O air and light! I am drunk with you! I am dazed—and I am plunged in sorrow.

One who has hearkened to the waters roaring down from the heights of Lung, and faint voices from the land of Ch'in; one who has listened to the cries of monkeys on the shores of the Yang-tse-Kiang, and the songs of the land of Pa; that renowned beauty Wang Chao-Chün, who saw before her the last jasper gate of her native land; that renowned Ch'u poet singing the glories of the tinted maple wood—ah! these knew sorrow.

And if I ascend, and, mindful of them, look out across the blue horizon, I feel the keen pang of grief that, piercing through me, finds my heart.

The soul of man swells like a wave at the coming of spring.  
But there is also the sadness of spring-time, which, like falling  
snow, distracts us.  
Both sorrow and joy throbbing and pulsing—a countless crowd of  
feelings are stirred and mingle together in this festival of  
perfume.  
What if I have a friend far away on the shores of the Hsiang!  
Clouds part us and hide us from each other.  
Upon a little wave I shed the tears of separation, and—little wave  
going eastward, take to my friend my soul-felt love.  
Oh! that I could grasp this golden light of spring, keep it and hoard  
it—a treasure-trove of days for my fairest far-off friend.

L. Cranmer-Byng.

### L I - P O

#### *The Palace of Chao-Yang*

No more the peach-tree droops beneath the snow;  
Spring draws her breath the willow boughs among.  
The mango-bird now maddens into song,  
And the swift-building swallows come and go.  
'Tis the time of the long daydreams, when laughing maybeams,  
On the mats of slothful revellers play;  
'Tis the time of glancing wings, and the dancing  
Of moon-moths whirling the hours away;  
When the golden armoured guardians are withdrawn,  
And pleasure haunts the rustling woods till dawn.  
A warm and perfumed wind  
Strays through the palace blind  
And wandering pries into some dim retreat  
Where every whisper stirs the heart to beat.  
Now all the gay parterres  
Are rivals for the sun  
That drains their jewelled goblets one by one  
From dimpled terrace and green dewy stairs.  
And the water-lily renders to the spring  
The wonder of her white unbosoming.  
Far away in the tall woods there is an oriole calling;

There are shadows in the blue pavilion of dancers, and music rising  
and falling,  
In the month of peach-bloom and plum-bloom, in the silken-  
screened recess  
Love is the burden of sweet voices, and the brief night melting, and  
the long caress.

*L. Cranmer-Byng, trans.*

#### FROM THE SHI-KING

##### *The Deserted Wife*

You came—a simple lad  
In dark blue cotton clad,  
To barter serge for silken wear;  
But not for silk you dallied there.  
Ah! was it not for me  
Who led you through the K'e,  
Who guided you  
To far Tun-K'ew?  
“It is not I who would put off the day;  
But you have none your cause to plead,”  
I said,—“O love, take heed,  
When the leaves fall do with me what you may.”

I saw the red leaves fall,  
And climbed the ruined wall,  
Towards the city of Fuh-kwan  
I did the dim horizon scan.  
“He cometh not,” I said,  
And burning tears were shed:  
You came—I smiled,  
Love-reconciled,  
You said, “By taper reed and tortoise-shell,  
I have divined, and all, O love, is well.”  
“Then haste the car,” I cried,  
“Gather my goods and take me to thy side.”

Before the mulberry tree  
With leaves hath strewn the lea,

How glossy-green are they! how rare!  
Ah! thou young thoughtless dove beware!  
Avoid the dark fruit rife  
With sorrow to thy life.  
And thou, whose fence  
Is innocence,  
Seek no sweet pleasuring with any youth!  
For when a man hath sinned, but little shame  
Is fastened to his name,  
Yet erring woman wears the garb of ruth.

When the lone mulberry tree  
With leaves bestrews the lea,  
They yellow slowly, slowly down  
From green to gold, from gold to brown.  
Three sombre years ago  
I fled with you, and lo,  
The floods of K'e  
Now silently  
Creep to the curtains of my little car.  
Through cloud and gloom I was your constant star;  
Now you have gone from sight,  
And love's white star roams aimless through the night.

For three long years your wife,  
Toil was my part in life,  
Early from sleep I rose and went  
About my labour, calm, content;  
Nor any morn serene  
Lightened the dull routine.  
Early and late,  
I was your mate,  
Bearing the burdens that were yours to share.  
Fain of the little love that was my lot,  
Ah, kinsmen, scorn me not!  
How should ye know when silence chills despair?

Old we should grow in accord,  
Old—and grief is my lord.

Between her banks the K'e doth steer,  
And pine-woods ring the lonely mere.  
In pleasant times I bound  
My dark hair to the sound  
Of whispered vows  
'Neath lilac boughs,  
And little recked o'er broken faith to weep.  
Now the grey shadows o'er the marshland creep:  
The willows stir and fret:  
Low in the west the dull dun sun hath set.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *Grey Dawns and Red*

Cold is the rain and cold the wind,  
The cock gives dawn shrill greeting;  
But a shadow steals across the blind,  
And oh! my heart is beating.

The rain drives down, the wind tears past,  
The cock shrills through the gloaming;  
But love is in the house at last,  
And sorrow flies his homing.

Though the world look dark through wind and rain,  
And the dismal cock's a-crowing;  
I'll sigh no more for the nights to wane,  
And it's oh! for the red dawns glowing.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *Lady of the Lagoon*

By the shores of that lagoon,  
Where the water-lily lies,  
Where the tall valerians rise,  
Slender as the crescent moon

Goes Hëa Nan . . . Ah, Hëa Nan,  
Sleep brings me no relief:  
My heart is full of grief.

By the shores of that lagoon,  
Where the drowsy lotus lies,  
Where the tall valerians rise,  
Brighter than the orbèd moon  
Shines Hëa Nan . . . Ah, Hëa Nan,  
I turn and turn all night,  
And dawn brings no respite.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

### *Through Eastern Gates*

Where cloud-like beauties thronged the way;  
Through eastern gates I wandered far,  
Although like clouds their faces are,  
My thoughts among them would not stay.  
She in rough silk and kerchief blue  
Gave me the only joy I knew.

I wandered by the curtain tower,  
Like flowering rushes were the maids;  
Although they match the rushes' flower,  
Soon from my mind their beauty fades.  
In humble silk and madder dye,  
She fills my heart with ecstasy.

*L. Cranmer-Byng.*

## M E I S H E N G \*

(B.C. 140)

### *The Beautiful Toilet*

Blue, blue is the grass about the river  
And the willows have overfilled the close garden.  
And within, the mistress, in the midmost of her youth,  
White, white of face, hesitates, passing the door.  
Slender, she puts forth a slender hand.

And she was a courtezan in the old days,  
And she has married a sot,  
Who now goes drunkenly out  
And leaves her too much alone.

*Ezra Pound.*

## R I H A K U

### *The River-Merchant's Wife: a Letter*

While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead  
I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.  
You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,  
You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.  
And we went on living in the village of Chokan:  
Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.

At fourteen I married My Lord you.  
I never laughed, being bashful.  
Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.  
Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.

\* From CATHAY, London, Elkin Mathews, 1915.

At fifteen I stopped scowling,  
I desired my dust to be mingled with yours  
Why should I climb the look-out?

At sixteen you departed,  
Forever and forever, and forever.  
You went into far Ku-to-Yen, by the river of swirling eddies,  
And you have been gone five months.  
The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.  
You dragged your feet when you went out.  
By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses,  
Too deep to clear them away!  
The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.  
The paired butterflies are already yellow with August  
Over the grass in the West Garden,  
They hurt me.  
I grow older,  
If you are coming down through the narrows of the river Kiang,  
Please let me know beforehand,  
And I will come out to meet you,  
As far as Cho-fu-Sa.

Ezra Pound.

*Poem by the Bridge at Ten-Shin*

March has come to the bridge-head,  
Peach boughs and apricot boughs hang over a thousand gates,  
At morning there are flowers to cut the heart,  
And evening drives them on the eastward-flowing waters.  
Petals are on the gone waters and on the going,  
    And on the back-swirling eddies,  
But to-day's men are not the men of the old days,  
Though they hang in the same way over the bridge-rail.

The sea's colour moves at the dawn  
And the princes still stand in rows, about the throne,  
And the moon falls over the portals of Sei-go-yo,  
And clings to the walls and the gate-top.  
With headgear glittering against the cloud and sun,

The lords go forth from the court, and into far borders.  
They ride upon dragon-like horses,  
Upon horses with head-trappings of yellow metal,  
And the streets make way for their passage.

Haughty their passing,  
Haughty their steps as they go into great banquets,  
To high halls and curious food,  
To the perfumed air and girls dancing,  
To clear flutes and clear singing;  
To the dance of the seventy couples;  
To the mad chase through the gardens.  
Night and day are given over to pleasure  
And they think it will last a thousand autumns,  
    Unwearying autumns.

For them the yellow dogs howl portents in vain,  
And what are they compared to the lady Riokushu,  
    That was cause of hate!

Who among them is a man like Han-rei  
    Who departed alone with his mistress,  
With her hair unbound, and he his own skiffs-man!

*Ezra Pound.*

#### FOUR POEMS OF DEPARTURE BY RIHAKU

*Light rain is on the light dust.  
The willows of the inn-yard  
Will be going greener and greener,  
But you, Sir, had better take wine ere your  
    departure,  
For you will have no friends about you  
When you come to the gates of Go.*

#### SEPARATION ON THE RIVER KIANG

Ko-jin goes west from Ko-kaku-ro,  
The smoke-flowers are blurred over the river.  
His lone sail blots the far sky.  
And now I see only the river,

The long Kiang, reaching heaven.

## TAKING LEAVE OF A FRIEND

Blue mountains to the north of the walls,  
White river winding about them;  
Here we must make separation  
And go out through a thousand miles of dead grass.  
Mind like a floating wide cloud.  
Sunset like the parting of old acquaintances  
Who bow over their clasped hands at a distance.  
Our horses neigh to each other as we are departing.

## LEAVE-TAKING NEAR SHOKU

“*Sanso, King of Shoku, built roads*”

They say the roads of Sanso are steep,  
Sheer as the mountains.  
The walls rise in a man’s face,  
Clouds grow out of the hill  
                        at his horse’s bridle.  
Sweet trees are on the paved way of the Shin,  
Their trunks burst through the paving,  
And freshets are bursting their ice  
                        in the midst of Shoku, a proud city.  
  
Men’s fates are already set,  
There is no need of asking diviners.

## THE CITY OF CHOAN

The phoenix are at play on their terrace.  
The phoenix are gone, the river flows on alone.  
Flowers and grass  
Cover over the dark path  
                        where lay the dynastic house of the Go.  
The bright cloths and bright caps of Shin  
Are now the base of old hills.

The three Mountains fall through the far heaven,  
The isle of White Heron  
            splits the two streams apart.

Now the high clouds cover the sun  
And I can not see Choan afar  
And I am sad.

*Ezra Pound.*

R I H A K U

*South-Folk in Cold Country*

The Dai horse neighs against the bleak wind of Etsu,  
The birds of Etsu have no love for En, in the north,  
Emotion is born out of habit.

Yesterday we went out of the Wild-Goose gate,  
To-day from the Dragon-Pen.\*

Surprised. Desert turmoil. Sea sun.

Flying snow bewilders the barbarian heaven.

Lice swarm like ants over our accoutrements.

Mind and spirit drive on the feathery banners.

Hard fight gets no reward.

Loyalty is hard to explain.

Who will be sorry for General Rishogu, the swift moving,  
Whose white head is lost for this province?

*Ezra Pound.*

\* *I.e.*, we have been warring from one end of the empire to the other, now east, now west, on each border.

W A N G W E I

*Hsiang-Chi Temple*

For Hsiang-chi Temple seeking far and near  
O'er cloudy peaks for miles I wandered lone.  
In this old wood no human tracks appear.  
In hills so vast how trace the bell's deep tone?

Huge boulders swallow up the bubbling streams.  
In chilly gloom the firs the daylight snare.  
The pools alone sing to the twilight's beams.  
Here meditation rules each heavy care.

*W. J. B. Fletcher.*

C H U K U A N G - I

*Rustic Felicity*

My little farm fivescore of silk-trees grows  
And acres five of grain in ordered rows.  
Thus having food and clothing and to spare  
My bounty often with my friends I share.

The Summer brings the ku-mi rice so fine;  
Chrysanthemums in Autumn spice the wine.  
My jolly spouse is glad my friends to see:  
And my young son obeys me readily.

At eve I dawdle in the garden fair  
With elms and willows shaded everywhere.  
When, wine-elated, Night forbids me stay,  
Through door and window grateful breezes play.

Bright, shoal and plain I see the Milky Way;  
And high and low the Bear o'er Heaven sway.

As yet intact some Bottles bear their Seal.—  
And shall to-morrow their contents reveal?

*W. J. B. Fletcher.*

T U F U

*The Milky Way*

Often hidden, often bright,  
Clearest on an autumn night,  
Sometimes covered with the shroud  
Of some fleecy streak of cloud,  
Yet, when passed, thou dost appear  
All the night both bright and clear.  
In and out thy starry doors  
    Fly the fairies of the sky,  
For we see them opening, closing,  
    As each spirit passes by.  
Thou descendest with the moon  
    Down the high empyrean hill:  
Ah, but thy most precious boon  
    When thou holdest breathless, still,  
Lest the weaver maid might miss  
Her herdboy lover's annual kiss.

*W. J. B. Fletcher.*

W A N G W E I

*The Moon*

In bamboo thicket hid, sitting alone am I.  
First my guitar I strum; then stop to whistle a while.  
Amid the grove so thick, no mortal can me spy.  
But we behold each other, the lucent Moon and I!

*W. J. B. Fletcher.*

*The Hunt*

The bows of horn are twanging, and bitter blows the North,  
As from the town of Wei-ch'eng the hunters issue forth.

The hawk's eye gazes keenly across the prairie dry.  
The snow is gone, and lightly the horsemen gallop by.  
To Hsin-li town we sweep along; then back to Hsi-liao.  
Lo! where we shot the eagle rolls the clouded sunset now!

*W. J. B. Fletcher.*

T U F U

*The Firefly*

Born from rotting grasses damp  
Still the daylight thou must fear.  
On my scroll thy tiny lamp  
Scarcely lets the words appear.  
But on stranger's dress from far  
Shinest thou a tender star.  
Or, when wind-borne, on the gauze  
Of my window making pause,  
Small thy phosphorescent beam  
As a fairy's eye doth gleam.  
From the rain you safely hide  
In the woodland undescried.  
But once November's frosts are chill  
Leaflike thou fadest from the hill.

*W. J. B. Fletcher.*

L O U Y I N G

*Hsi-Shih's Washing Stone \**

When Hsi-Shih steeped her yarn  
Beside the purling brook,  
Like mosses on her washing stone  
Men's hearts with yearning shook.  
But since she went to Ku Su  
And thence returned no more,  
For whom do Peach and Plum trees bloom  
Along the vernal shore?

*W. J. B. Fletcher.*

\* Found washing in the brook by an Emperor who made her his wife. See "Hsi-Chih" by Tu-Fu.

T S U I K U O - F U

*Fallax Puer*

The golden steps, ah! I had swept so clean!  
The frost I brushed away was white as snow.  
He came not. To my room I entering  
The curtains drew, and touched the lute's sweet string.  
To see the Autumn Moon were double woe!

*W. J. B. Fletcher.*

W A N G W E I

*A Mountain Retreat*

Over against the Chung-nan Hill  
See shyly peer my roof of thatch:  
The whole year round so lone and still  
    No stranger's hand will lift the latch.  
Time is my own to idle here;  
    In pebbled rills the fish to catch:  
Or quaff a flask of vintage clear.  
Come thou and share my simple cheer:  
    An hour's pleasure snatch.

*W. J. B. Fletcher.*

W A N G C H I E N

*The Ancient Palace*

The ancient Palace lies in desolation spread.  
The very garden flowers in solitude grow red.  
    Only some withered dames with whitened hair remain,  
Who sit there idly talking of mystic monarchs dead.

*W. J. B. Fletcher.*

W A N G W E I \*

*Answering Vice-Prefect Chang*

As the years go by, give me but peace,  
Freedom from ten thousand matters.  
I ask myself and always answer,  
What can be better than coming home?  
A wind from the pine-trees blows my sash,  
And my lute is bright with the mountain-moon.  
You ask me about good and evil? . . .  
Hark, on the lake there's a fisherman singing!

*Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.*

*Bound Home to Mount Sung*

The limpid river, past its bushes  
Flowing slowly as my chariot,  
Seems a fellow-voyager  
Returning with the evening-birds.  
A ruined city-wall overtops an old ferry,  
Autumn sunset floods the peaks. . . .  
Far away, beside Mount Sung,  
I shall rest and close my door.

*Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.*

*A Message to P'ai Ti*

Cold and blue now are the mountains  
From autumn-rain that beat all day.  
By my thatch-door, leaning on my staff,  
I listen to cicadas in the evening wind.  
Sunset lingers at the ferry,  
Cooking-smoke floats up from the houses. . . .  
Oh, when shall I pledge Chieh-yu again,  
And sing a wild poem at Five Willows!

*Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.*

\* From *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, Feb., 1922.

### *On the Way to the Temple*

Not knowing the way to the Temple of Heaped Fragrance,  
I have roamed, under miles of mountain-cloud,  
Old woods without a human track.  
But far on the height I hear a bell,  
A rillet sings over winding rocks,  
The sun is tempered by green pines. . . .  
At twilight, close to an emptying pool,  
I lie and master the Passion-dragon.

*Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.*

### *Mount Chung-Nan*

The Great One's height near the City of Heaven  
Joins a thousand mountains to the corner of the sea.  
Clouds, when I look back, close behind me;  
Mists, when I enter them, are gone.  
A central peak divides the wilds  
And weather into many valleys. . . .  
Needing a place to spend the night,  
I call to a woodcutter over the river.

*Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.*

### *A View of the Han River*

With its three Hsiang branches it reaches Ch'u border  
And with nine streams touches the gateway of Ching:  
This river runs beyond heaven and earth,  
Where the color of mountains both is and is not.  
The dwellings of men seem floating along  
On ripples of the distant sky. . . .  
O Hsiang-yang, how your beautiful days  
Make drunken my old mountain-heart!

*Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.*

### *In My Lodge at Wang-Ch'uan After a Long Rain*

The woods have stored the rain, and slow comes the smoke  
As rice is cooked on faggots and carried to the fields;  
Over the quiet marshland flies a white egret,  
And mango-birds are singing in the full summer trees.

I have learned to watch in peace the mountain morning-glories,  
To eat split dewy sunflower-seeds under a bough of pine,  
To yield the place of honor to any boor at all. . . .  
Why should I frighten sea-gulls even with a thought?

Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.

### *My Retreat at Chung-Nan*

My heart in middle age found the Way,  
And I came to dwell at the foot of this mountain.  
When the spirit moves, I wander alone  
Where beauty is known only to me.  
I will walk till the water checks my path,  
Then sit and watch the rising clouds,  
And some day meet an old woodcutter,  
And talk and laugh and never return.

Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.

### *In a Retreat Among Bamboos*

Alone I am sitting under close bamboos,  
Playing on my lute, singing without words.  
Who can hear me in this thicket? . . .  
Bright and friendly comes the moon.

Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.

### *Lines*

You who arrive from my old country,  
Tell me what has happened there!  
Did you see, when you passed my silken window,  
The first cold blossom of the plum?

Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.

### *A Parting*

Friend, I have watched you down the mountain  
Till now in the dark I close my thatch-door. . . .  
Grasses return again green in the spring,  
But, O Wang Sun, will you return?

Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.

### *A Song at Wei-Ch'eng*

The morning rain settled the dust in Wei-ch'eng;  
In the yard of the tavern green willows revive. . . .  
Oh, wait to empty one more cup!  
West of Yang Gate—no old friends!

*Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.*

### *The Beautiful Hsi-Shih*

Since beauty is honored all over the empire,  
How could Hsi-shih remain humbly at home?  
At dawn washing clothes by a lake in Yueh;  
At dusk in the Palace of Wu, a great lady!  
Poor, no rarer than the others—  
Exalted, everyone praising her rareness.  
But above all honors, the honor was hers  
Of blinding with passion an emperor's reason.  
Girls who had once washed silk beside her  
Now were ordered away from her carriage. . . .  
Ask them, in her neighbors' houses,  
If by wrinkling their brows they can copy her beauty.

*Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.*

### *A Song of Young Girls from Lo-Yang*

There are girls from Lo-yang in that door across the street,  
Some of them fifteen and some a little older.  
While their master rides a rapid horse with jade bit and bridle,  
Their handmaid brings them codfish on a golden plate.  
On the painted pavilions, facing their red towers,  
Cornices are pink and green with peach-bloom and with willow;  
Canopies of silk awn their seven-scented chairs;  
Rare fans shade them home, to their nine-flowered curtains.  
Their lord, with rank and wealth and in the green of life,  
Exceeds, for magnificence, even Chi-lun;  
He favors girls of lowly birth and teaches them to dance,  
And he gives away his coral-trees to almost anyone.

The wind of dawn just stirs when his nine soft lights go out,  
Those nine soft lights like petals in a flying chain of flowers.  
From play to play they have barely time for singing over the songs;  
No sooner are they dressed again than incense burns before them.  
Those they know in town are only the rich and the lavish,  
And day and night they're visiting the homes of Chao and Li. . . .  
Who cares about a girl from Yueh, face jade-white,  
Humble, poor, alone, by the river, washing silk!

*Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.*

### *Harmonizing a Poem by Palace-Attendant Kuo*

High beyond the thick wall a tower shines with sunset,  
Where peach and plum are blooming and willow-cotton flies.  
You have heard it in your office, the court-bell of twilight:  
Birds discover perches, officials head for home.  
Your morning-jade will tinkle as you thread the golden palace,  
You will bring the word of heaven from the closing gates at night.  
And I should serve there with you; but, being full of years,  
I have put aside official robes and am resting from my ills.

*Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.*

### *A Green Stream*

I have come on the River of Yellow Flowers,  
Borne by the current of a green stream  
Rounding ten thousand turns through the mountains  
To journey less than a hundred li.  
Rapids hum on scattered stones,  
Light is dim in the close pines,  
The surface of an inlet sways with nut-horns,  
Weeds are lush along the banks.  
Down in my heart I have always been clear  
As this clarity of waters.  
Oh, to remain on a broad flat rock  
And cast my fishing-line forever!

*Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.*

L I S H A N G - Y I N

*The Figured Harp*

I wondered why my figured harp had fifty strings,  
Each with its flower-like fret and interval of youth . . .  
The sage of Chuang was day-dreaming, bewitched by butterflies,  
The spring-heart of Emperor Wang was crying in a cuckoo,  
Mermen wept their pearly tears down a moon-green sea,  
Blue fields were breathing their jade to the sun . . .  
A moment that ought to have lasted forever  
Had come and gone before I knew.

*Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.*

*The Precious Dagger*

I ponder the poem of The Precious Dagger . . .  
My road has wound through many years . . .  
Now yellow leaves are shaken with storm,  
Yet fiddle and pipe enliven the Blue Houses:  
On the surface of things I am greeting new people;  
But doomed to distance from old friends,  
I long from my heart for Shin-feng wine  
To melt away my thousand woes.

*Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu.*

Y U A N C H E N

*The Summer Palace*

In the mouldering old imperial palace,  
Peonies are red, but no one comes to see them;  
And the ladies-in-waiting have grown white-haired,  
Debating the reign of Hsuan Tsung.

*Song*

On the Eastern Way at the city of Lo-yang  
 At the edge of the road peach-trees and plum-trees grow;  
 On the two sides,—flower matched by flower;  
 Across the road,—leaf touching leaf.

A spring wind rises from the north-east;  
 Flowers and leaves gently nod and sway.  
 Up the road somebody's daughter comes  
 Carrying a basket, to gather silkworms' food

*(She sees the fruit trees in blossom and, forgetting about  
 her silkworms, begins to pluck the branches.)*

With her slender hand she breaks a branch from the tree;  
 The flowers fall, tossed and scattered in the wind.

*The tree says:*

“Lovely lady, I never did you harm:  
 Why should you hate me and do me injury?”

*The lady answers:*

“At high autumn in the eighth and ninth moons  
 When the white dew changes to hoar-frost,  
 At the year's end the wind would have lashed your boughs,  
 Your sweet fragrance could not have lasted long.  
 Though in the autumn your leaves patter to the ground,  
 When spring comes, your gay bloom returns.  
 But in men's lives when their bright youth is spent  
 Joy and love never come back again.”

*Arthur Waley.*

THREE LYRICS FROM THE CHINESE

I

(Written 718 B.C.)

The K'e still ripples to its banks,  
    The moorfowl cry.  
My hair was gathered in a knot,  
    And you came by.

Selling of silk you were, a lad  
    Not of our kin;  
You passed at sunset on the road  
    From far-off Ts'in.

The frogs were croaking in the dusk;  
    The grass was wet.  
We talked together, and I laughed:  
    I hear it yet.

I thought that I would be your wife;  
    I had your word.  
And so I took the road with you,  
    And crossed the ford.

I do not know when first it was  
    Your eyes looked cold.  
But all this was three years ago,  
    And I am old.

II

(Written 769 B.C.)

My lord is gone away to serve the King.  
The pigeons homing at the set of sun  
Are side by side upon the courtyard wall,

And far away I hear the herdsmen call  
The goats upon the hill when day is done.  
But I, I know not when he will come home.  
I live the days alone.

My lord is gone away to serve the King.  
I hear a pigeon stirring in the nest,  
And in the field a pheasant crying late.  
—She has not far to go to find her mate.  
There is a hunger will not let me rest.  
The days have grown to months and months to years,  
And I have no more tears.

### III

(Written 675 B.C.)

"Is there anything whereof it may be said, 'See, this is new?' it hath been ready of old time, which was before us."

I would have gone to my lord in his need,  
Have galloped there all the way,  
But this is a matter concerns the State,  
And I, being a woman, must stay.

I watched them leaving the palace yard,  
In carriage and robe of state.  
I would have gone by the hills and the fords;  
I know they will come too late.

I may walk in the garden and gather  
Lilies of mother-of-pearl.  
I had a plan would have saved the State.  
—But mine are the thoughts of a girl.

The Elder Statesmen sit on the mats,  
And wrangle through half the day;  
A hundred plans they have drafted and dropped,  
And mine was the only way.

*Translated from the Chinese into Latin by Pere Lacharme (18th Century), and into English by Helen Waddell.*

F R O M T H E H W A - T S E E N  
(*Ming Dynasty*)

*Portrait of a Young Noble\**

He is the first of youths;  
He is a person of talent also.  
Indeed so fine a youth, as yet, you have never seen his like,  
'Tis unnecessary to state that his father fills an important office,  
That he is on intimate terms of friendship with the Sovereign.  
The family being wealthy, values amber beads and corals, as dust,  
While pearls and gems are esteemed but as pebbles.  
His garden, which is extensive, is delightful for pleasure.  
To the right are planted rows of willows, and on the left are  
flowers.

One hundred domestics constantly attend on his person  
Who in winter dress in silk and in summer their attire is rich crape.  
They are extremely fond of playing at chess  
On the soft reed and three-stringed instruments.  
At times, they ascend the lofty room, and play on the flute,  
While again they sing accompanied by the Pe-pa.†  
I think if all the servants are thus happy,  
That pleasure and mirth must be still more enjoyed by their master.  
The young Gentleman's amiable manners are no affectation;  
A person of talent, polite, and a descendant of an ancient family,  
The literary degrees of Tsin-sze and Chang-yuen are as sure as  
in his hand,

For his essays resemble elegant embroidery added to flowers.

Moreover, his disposition being mild and complaisant in the extreme,  
So much so that if he gets intoxicated he does not quarrel nor scold  
in the least.

Whoever he sees, whatever be their rank, he is polite,  
And whenever a friend comes the servants are ordered to bring tea.

The rich, the ancients say, are always lofty and proud,  
But he alone, considers all mankind like a lovely flower.

*Peter Perring Thoms (1824).*

\* This is one of the earliest English translations.

† Guitar.

FROM THE CANTONESE

*Paraphrased by Clifford Bax \**

[To certain readers it may be of interest to learn that the poems rendered here were written about three hundred years ago, by poets who lived in or around the strange old city of Canton. It is reported that a large majority of the later Chinese poets have come from this district.]

*The Wind and the Willow*

Down the riverside the willows, trailing lightly to and fro,  
Spread or close their fragrant curtains all the sunlit day.  
Reining back his horse a moment, comes a youth and bending low  
Breaks a branch and rides upon his way.

All the leaves begin to flutter in the horseman's hand, for now  
Runs the wind of spring beside him, crying out her wrong.  
It seems as though she could not bear to lose her broken willow-  
bough,  
Having been his lover for so long.

*A Vigil*

The perfume in the golden incense-jar  
Has almost burned away. The waterclock,  
Slow-dripping, makes the silence more intense.

A momentary coolness from the dark  
Flows inward on the tender-handed breeze.

The beautiful pictures of the April night  
Have tuned the soul up to so high a note  
That now it smiles even to think of sleep.  
On the verandah, thrown by the full moon,  
Lie the pale shadows of the flowering boughs.

\* "Twenty-five Chinese Poems." Paraphrased by Clifford Bax. Hender-  
son's, London.

## *Grief*

(A song to mourn my maiden in the latter part of the spring.)

Now have I bidden farewell to the Spring that is ah! how fleet,  
And a long farewell to my lover; alas, how long is the pain!

Truly the flowers in a year will blossom afresh at my feet,  
But never the season return when I and my darling shall meet.

Who gave me a gift so precious but left me to love it in vain?  
The Master of Magic who sent it could surely restore it again.

If only to darken the darkness, O Thou in Thy heavens above,  
Why dost Thou light for a moment the lamp of a beautiful  
thing?

Who is there now that will carry my little wine-gourd for love  
When I go next year to the meadows to look on the joy of the  
spring?

## *The Chess-Party*

Now the sharp shower of evening stops;  
Now the cicadas make no sound.  
The summer-house is jewelled round  
With loosening golden drops.

Now, too, the players one by one  
Have wandered home. Behind the hill,  
Mighty and growing mightier still  
Falls the revolving sun.

Within, set out as if for play,  
The chessmen stand. A low last ray  
That lengthens out by slow degrees  
Pierces the bamboo-curtained door,  
And shadows from the unseen trees  
Pattern the matted floor.

### *Autumn Melancholy*

Not only mine is Autumn yet I grieve  
With long gray thoughts of such a sombre tone  
That I can almost make myself believe  
She comes to me alone.  
Now whatsoever meets mine eyes or ears  
Does but augment the sadness of this eve,  
And fraught with all the anguish man has known  
Touches my heart to tears.

The swallow long ago went overseas,  
And in her place the wild-goose only comes;  
Among the leafless, many-twisting trees  
The crows are watching how to steal the plums.

Soon from the temple, standing all in shade,  
The gloomy bells begin to sound, and soon  
Across the window-paper shine or fade  
The lights or shadows of the uprising moon.

### *The Old Fisherman*

The blast of the north begins to blow,  
For the storm awakes!  
The reed-flowers, flying above and below,  
Whiten the air like fluttering flakes  
Of snow.

Beyond the fence of the osier-stalks  
A misty half-moon sets,  
But the old, old fisherman laughs and talks  
And patches the worn-out nets.

Now is the year at an end;  
The wandering salmon descend  
Far down to the shore where rivers run free  
And are lost in the salt of the sea!

[See Note 15.]

## P A I T A - S H U N

### *The Dragon*

Ever-changing the cumulus surges above the horizon,  
Black with thunder or white with the glitter of snow-capped  
mountains,  
Rosy with dawn or with sunset, an age-long shifting pageant,  
Stuff of chaos for dreamers to forge into magical visions,  
Ranged below it the common earth and the tiger-forces,  
Behind and above it the starry deeps of the heavens.

Out of the formless clouds we shaped the deathless Dragon,  
Symbol of change and sign of the infinite, symbol of spirit.

*Dr. Frederick Peterson.*

### *The Bridge*

Across the foaming river  
The old bridge bends its bow;  
My father's fathers built it  
In ages long ago.

They never left the farmstead  
Past which the waters curled.  
Why should one ever wander  
When here is all the world?

*Dr. Frederick Peterson.*

### *The Exile*

He came with golden gifts  
And crown and ring—  
My people made me wed  
The Tartar King.

[ 121 ]

And now I roam the steppes  
A nomad wife,  
Far from my happy home—  
I hate the life!

I hate the felt-walled tent,  
I hate the meat,  
I hate the wild mare's milk—  
Life once was sweet.

O thou far yellow crane  
In heaven's blue dome,  
Give me thy wings to fly  
Back to my home!

*Dr. Frederick Peterson.*

### *The Pai'lou*

With phœnixes and tigers  
And dragon's crooked files  
Faience and wood and marble,  
Quaint wrought in curious styles,  
The three-arched gate—a triptych  
That frames the stretching miles—  
Still stands a glazing glory  
Of multi-colored tiles.

The wind blows through the pai'lou  
Like the sound of myriad feet,  
And in the ancient thuyas  
The nestling branches meet,  
As if a myriad voices  
Were murmuring in the street,  
The voices of the old time  
Ere time had grown so fleet.

The pai'lou stands there lonely  
Slow falling to decay,  
Where are the red-maned camels  
That knew the desert way,

The tilted carts, the donkeys,  
The throngs in bright array?  
Where are the silk-clad maidens  
O Gate of Yesterday?

*Dr. Frederick Peterson.*

*"We Are All Brothers Between the Four Seas"*  
(*Confucius*)

The One bethought Him to make man  
Of many-colored dust,  
And mixed the holy spirit in  
In portions right and just:  
Each had a part of mind and heart  
From One Himself in trust.

Thus came the brown and yellow men  
And black and white and red,  
So different in their outer look,  
Alike in heart and head;  
The self-same earth before their birth.  
The self-same dust when dead.

*Dr. Frederick Peterson.*

*Wild Geese*

How oft against the sunset sky or moon  
I watched that moving zigzag of spread wings  
In unforgotten autumns gone too soon,  
In unforgotten springs!

Creatures of desolation, for they fly  
Above all lands bound by the curling foam;  
In misty fens, wild moors and trackless sky  
These wild things have their home.

They know the tundra of Siberian coasts,  
And tropic marshes by the Indian seas;  
They know the clouds and night and starry hosts  
From Coux to Pleiades.

Dark-flying rune against the western glow—  
It tells the sweep and loneliness of things—  
Symbol of autumn vanished long ago.  
Symbol of coming springs!

*Dr. Frederick Peterson.*

(See Notes 16 and 17.)

### *Temple-Inscriptions*

Half-way up the hill  
And into the light.

Where the heart is,  
There is Buddha.  
How can the hills of the spirit  
Be only in the Western Quarter?

The distant water,  
The near hills,  
The deep blue of the clearing sky.

What is sacred is universal.  
The three religions have for their soul  
One principle.

The pure wind,  
The bright moon,  
The clear and thoughtful heart.

*Witter Bynner.*

### *Change*

*(An Old Chinese Song)*

The days and months do not last long,  
The springs and autumns follow one by one,  
And when I watch the fall of the flowers  
And of the leaves and of the trees,

I know that even the loveliest person  
Little by little must change.

*Witter Bynner.*

### *Colloquy*

(*An Old Chinese Song*)

“You with the collar of blue,  
I cannot come to you,  
But you, if you please, are free—  
Then why not come to me?”

“*You with the girdle of blue,*  
*I cannot come to you,*  
*But you, if you choose, are free—*  
*So why not come to me?*”

“O you who fancy the new,  
The day when you go for a view  
From the tower lasts for me  
A month or two or three!”

*Witter Bynner.*

### *Home*

(*An Old Chinese Song*)

Great trees in the south  
Give me no shelter  
And women loitering by the Han  
Leave me cold.

O Han too deep for diving,  
O Kiang too long for poling!

Faggots, brambles,  
I cut them with a will—  
But those girls facing home,  
I should like to feed their horses.

O Han too deep for diving,  
O Kiang too long for poling!

*Witter Bynner.*

Faggots, artemisia,  
I cut them with a will—  
But those girls facing home,  
I should like to feed their colts.

### *The Pure-Hearted Girl*

(An Old Chinese Song)

On the river-island—  
The ospreys are echoing us  
Where is the pure-hearted girl  
To be our princess?

Long lotus, short lotus,  
Leaning with the current,  
Turns like our prince in his quest  
For the pure-hearted girl.

He has sought and not found her.  
Awake, he has thought of her,  
Asleep, he has dreamed of her,  
Dreamed and tossed in his sleep.

Long lotus, short lotus,  
Pluck it to left and to right,  
And make ready with lutes and with harps  
For the pure-hearted girl.

Long lotus, short lotus,  
Cook it for a welcome,  
And be ready with bells and with drums  
For the pure-hearted girl.

*Witter Bynner.*

II

JAPANESE POETRY



SOME POEMS FROM THE MANYOSHU  
AND RYOJIN HISSHO\*

Translated by ARTHUR WALEY

*Manyō*

I. *Manyō*. Of the four thousand one hundred short poems in the *Manyōshū*, about two hundred have been translated, by Florenz, † Aston, ‡ Dickins,\*\* and others. †† Many more deserve translation, particularly the dialect-songs, which have been avoided by previous translators. A few of these (noted as such when they occur), and some fifty other songs not hitherto translated, will be found below, with text and rendering.

For general information with regard to the *Manyō*, I must refer my reader to the works mentioned at the foot of this page. The order of the poems is that of the *Manyō*; the numbers, those of the *Kokka Daikwan*.‡‡

By Fujiwara no Kamatari (A.D. 614-59). This song, astounding in its simplicity, was made by Kamatari when he married the lady-in-waiting Yasumiko.

95

I have got her,  
Have got Yasumiko;  
She who for any man  
Was thought hard to get,  
Yasumiko I have got!

MIKATA NO SAMI

123

When it is put up, it straggles;  
When it is let down, it is too long,  
My lady's hair!  
This great while that I have not seen her  
How tangled it must have grown!

\* Journal of the Asiatic Society, April, 1921.

† Geschichte der japanischen Literatur.

‡ History of Japanese Literature.

\*\* Japanese Texts.

†† e.g., Waley, Japanese Poetry (Clarendon Press, 1919).

‡‡ Where no date is given in index of authors it may be assumed that the writers in this group lived c. A.D. 700. In cases where no writer's name is given the poems are anonymous.

(Reply to above)

124

Every one is saying  
“Now it is too long”  
And “Put it up”;  
But the hair that you used to look at  
However tangled it may grow—

MIKATA NO SAMI

125

What longing fills my heart  
When at the meeting of the ways that tread  
The shadow of orange-trees  
I meet not with my love!

THE PRINCE OF ARIMA  
(SEVENTH CENTURY)

142

My rice that when I was at home  
I ate from a wooden bowl,  
Now that I wander  
On grass-pillowed journey  
In an oak-leaf is served!

607

Though now to all men  
“Go sleep!” the evening bell  
Its warning tolls;  
Yet I that am longing for my lord,  
Alas, I sleep not!

LADY KASA  
(DIED A.D. 733)

1158

Of onward-creeping waves  
That bleach the pine-tree roots  
How very clean the sound,  
At Sumiyoshi shore!

1165

That crane who in the evening breeze  
Searches the shore for food,  
Because the tide grows high  
And the waves of the offing rise  
Calls warning to his mate.

1235

The waves are high.  
How now, helmsman,  
Shall we like water-birds  
Sleep a floating sleep,  
Or go on rowing? \*

1257

Only because you smiled on me  
With a smile like the lily which grows  
In the grass-clump by the wayside,  
Am I to call you bride?

1263

“The time is dawn”  
The crows of night are calling;  
But round the tree-tops of yonder mountain  
All yet is still, †

THE LADY OF HARIMA

1777

Were it not for you,  
Why should I adorn my body?  
Even the little combs of boxwood  
That are in my comb-box  
I think I should not use.

HITOMARO

1796

How sad to gaze upon the shore  
Where hand in hand I wandered  
With a maiden vanished  
As leaves fall from the trees!

HITOMARO

1885

All other things  
Find ways to be young again;  
Man only with staying old  
Must rest content.

\* A satirical appeal to the oarsmen to row hard through the storm.

† Addressed by a lady to a lover leaving her at dawn.

HITOMARO

1892      Even the nightingale  
          That has lost its way  
          In the mist of the spring hills  
          Not more baffled is  
          Than I by the maze of love.

1949      The cuckoo's cry  
          That at the daybreak of to-day  
          I heard to ring—  
          Did you hear it, or were you sleeping  
          Your morning sleep, my lord?

HITOMARO

2368      Since first I left the hands  
          Of the mother who suckled me,  
          Never by plight so helpless  
          Was I yet perplexed!

HITOMARO

2495      Oh that I might get sight  
          Of my lady hidden away  
          Like silkworms in their cocoons,  
          The silkworms that her mother breeds!

2550      Abroad I dream,  
          At home forever dream,  
          Of a form that vanished, trailing  
          Petticoats crimson-dyed.

2564      My lady's hair that is black  
          As the whortleberry—  
          To-night, too, when I am far away,  
          Does she trail it in sleep across the bed?

2687      On the under-leaves of the thicket  
          Of hemp close-growing \*  
          Fast falls the dew;  
          Do not leave me till the dawn breaks,  
          Even should my mother know—

\* The meaning of this fixed epithet of "hemp" is uncertain.

- 2841 Because but dimly  
At the break of morning  
I saw my lover's form,  
All the hours of to-day  
In longing I shall spend.
- 2855 Clear as gleams the road  
That to-day the workmen were digging  
I have heard it at last,  
The tale that of my lady is told.
- 2859 Asuka River  
Right to its source I mounted  
And came back hither;  
To-night, I swear it,  
I will not leave you till dawn.
- 2869 Now, now shall I  
Die, lo my lord!  
Because we met not  
Being in mind so troubled  
That I cannot rest.
- 3149 Though on new mulberry-leaves  
Of Tsukubane the silkworms were fed  
From whose silk my dress is spun,  
Thy splendid garment  
Rashly would I wear! \*
- 3350 On the Shinano way  
Where they are making the new path,  
Upon the spikes  
Do not tread with bare feet;  
Put on your shoes, my Brother!
- 3455 Because I am longing,  
Come, O my Brother!  
The willows of the hedge—  
Their tops I will trim,  
And wait for you there.

\* Addressed by a rustic lady to a fine lord. To "share a garment" means to lie under the same cloak.

3459      My hand that is sore  
With pounding the rice,  
To-night again  
The young lord's son—  
Will he take it and sigh?

3476      Well may my beloved  
Be pining for me;  
For while of months that pass  
The stream flows by  
How dear she grows!

3517      Like a white cloud  
Has my lady vanished.  
Oh, what shall I do?  
She rides upon my heart,  
And I am thus dispirited.

3873      At my house door  
Loudly the curlews cry;  
Rise up, rise up,  
My one night's bride!  
Lest our love be known to men.

SASAIBE NO ISOSHIMA

4285      Where I must go  
The noise of waves resounds;  
In the place from whence I come  
Children and wife I have left.

HASEBE OTOSHI

4389      With the swiftness of a white wave  
That suddenly whelms the stern  
Of a ship at sea  
Has come the King's command,  
At an hour when I expected it not.

4405      The sash that, saying  
              "For remembrance wear it,"  
              My lady put on me—  
              Though it wear to a thread  
              Never will I untie it!

4431      On this frosty night when clash  
              The bamboo leaves in the wind,  
              Better than these nine coats I wear  
              My lady's limbs would warm me.\*

\* Song of a soldier fighting on the frontier.

### *Ryōjin Hishō*

*Ryōjin Hishō.* The priest Kenkō speaks in his *Tsuregureusa* (c. 1336) of a song-book called the *Ryōjin Hishō*. "Even in the words of these rustic tunes," he says, "there are many charming passages." The songs were supposed to have been collected in the middle of the twelfth century under the auspices of the Emperor Goshirakawa. Soon after Kenkō's time the book disappeared and was not rediscovered till 1911, when Mr. Wada Hidematsu unearthed the MS. in a second-hand bookshop. It was published by Mr. Sasaki Nobutsuna in the following year. Most of the songs are crude paraphrases of passages from the Buddhist scriptures, and are of no interest as literature; others are adaptations of well-known classical poems. But there remains a residuum of true folk-poetry, which is of the greatest interest.

The book has not, so far as I know, been even alluded to by any European writer; I have therefore translated a few of the folk-poems.

- 1 May he that bade me trust him, but did not come,  
Turn into a demon with three horns on his head,  
That all men may fly from him!  
May he become a bird of the water-fields  
Where frost, snow, and hail fall,  
That his feet may be frozen to ice!  
Oh, may he become a weed afloat on the pond!  
May he tremble as he walks with the trembling of the hare,  
with the trembling of the doe!
- 2 When I look at my lovely lady,  
"Oh that I might become a clinging vine," I yearn,  
"That from toe to tip I might be twined about her.  
Then though they should cut, though they should carve—  
Inseparable our lots!"
- 3 The hat you loved, the damask-trimmed reed-hat  
Has fallen, fallen!  
Into Kamo River, into the middle of the river.  
And while I searched and while I sought

Day dawned, day dawned;  
Oh the rustling, rustling of that autumn night by the pools!

4 As for my love—

Yesterday he came not, nor the day before was seen.  
If to-day there is no news  
With to-morrow's idle hours  
Oh what shall I do?

5 The conch-shell fastened

At the pilgrim's thigh,  
The pilgrim mountain-faring—  
With a *chō* it has fallen,  
With a *tei* it has cracked:  
Even so my heart is shattered  
By this torment of love.

6 But yesterday

I came from the East, and brought  
No bride with me;  
I pray you, take  
This purple hunting cloak I wear  
And buy for me a maid!

7 Like the rattan-whip

That the headsman of the mountain  
Wears fastened at his thigh,  
To the limbs of one that should love me  
Would that I were pressed!

8 Things that bend in the wind—

The tall branches of pine-tree tops,  
Or the little twigs of bamboos,  
Boats that run with spread sails on the sea,  
Floating clouds in the sky,  
And in the fields the flowering *susuki*.

9 The Warden of the barrier,

The Barrier of the Gatemen in Tsukushi Land  
Has grown old and the hair of his temples is white.

He that in his Ward-house is warden  
Of the barrier that bars the road

How comes it that he cannot tarry  
The passage of the years?

10 Even the moon—

The moon at each new-moon is young again.  
But of me that am forever ageing,  
Oh what will the end be?

11 For sport and play

I think that we are born;  
For jesting and laughter  
I doubt not we are born.  
For when I hear  
The voices of children at their play,  
My limbs, even my  
Stiff limbs, are stirred.

12 Dance, dance, Mr. Snail!

If you won't, I shall leave you  
For the little horse,  
For the little ox  
To tread under his hoof,  
To trample to bits.  
But if quite prettily  
You dance your dance,  
To a garden of flowers  
I will carry you to play.\*

13 Oh gods almighty!

If gods indeed you are,  
Take pity on me;  
For even the gods were once  
Such men as we.

\* There is a modern Tokyo children's song which begins *Mai, mai, tsuburo!* But like most modern snail-songs it ends with an appeal to the animal to put out its horns.

14 In the unexplored  
Deep hills where even of bird  
There is no song—  
Voices of men I hear.  
Who can these be? It is the passing  
Of the holy pilgrims on their way.

TRANSLATIONS  
By ARTHUR WALEY  
(1926)

[The book from which the following poems are chosen is intended as an aid to the study of ancient Japanese. The translations, which were word for word and line for line, have been revised by the translator himself for the purpose of inclusion in this anthology.]

A K A H I T O

(CIRCA A.D. 730)

The men of valour  
To the honourable hunt have gone;  
The ladies  
Are trailing their red petticoats  
Over the clean sea-beach.

(*Manyōshū* 1001.)

H I T O M A R O

(CIRCA A.D. 700)

On the moor of Kasuga  
The rising of smoke is seen.  
The women surely  
Must be boiling the shoots  
They have plucked in the spring fields.

(*Manyōshū* 1879.)

A N O N Y M O U S

(SIXTH CENTURY [?])

Loosed from Winter's prison  
When Spring comes forth,  
In the morning

[ 140 ]

The white dew falls;  
In the evening  
The mists trail.  
And in the valley of Hatsuse  
Beneath the twigs of the trees  
The nightingale sings.

(*Manyōshū* 3222.)

#### A N O N Y M O U S

Like the waves that ripple  
Over the rough shore  
Of the sea of Ago,  
My longing for you  
Has no time when it is still.

(*Manyōshū* 3224.)

#### A N O N Y M O U S

(VERY EARLY)

High mountains and the sea indeed—  
The one goes on being a mountain  
Solid as ever;  
The other goes on being the sea  
And will never be anything else.  
But man  
Is a flower-like thing,  
Man of this fleeting world.

(*Manyōshū* 3332.)

#### A N O N Y M O U S

Near the valley  
Though my house is built,  
High-tree'd  
Though my village be,  
Not once has the cuckoo  
Come here to sing.  
His singing voice  
Wanting to hear

In the morning  
I go out to the gate;  
In the evening I cross the valley.  
But though I long for it,  
Not even one song  
Have I yet heard.

(*Manyōshū* 4209.)

S O S E I H O S H I , A P R I E S T  
(CIRCA A.D. 890)

Taking as companion  
Only the showers  
Of the Godless Month \*

How sad to enter  
Upon unknown mountain paths!

(*Gosenshu* 454.)

F U J I W A R A N O O K I K A Z E  
(CIRCA A.D. 910)

As for my love—  
If you would care to know how much of it  
there is,  
Count the number  
Of the waves that may be approaching  
On Tago shore.

(*Gosenshu* 631.)

T A C H I B A N A N O T A D A M O T O  
(CIRCA A.D. 950)

Since you will never obstruct  
One jot the thoughts  
That the heart sends,

\* The tenth month, when the gods are absent from their shrines on earth.

Why should you interpose yourselves,  
White clouds of the mountain-crest?

(*Gosenshu* 1307.)

K I N O F U M I M O T O

(CIRCA 950 A.D.)

Spring mist,  
When I saw you rising  
I thought you were the year \* with its  
new treasures  
Coming from beyond the hills.

(*Shu-i-shu* 2.)

N A K A T S U K A S A , P O E T E S S

O nightingale,  
If it were not for your voice  
How would the mountain village  
Where the snow is still unmelted  
Know that Spring has come?

(*Shu-i-shu* 10.)

Y E K E I H O S H I , A P R I E S T

The cherry-blossoms  
Of the tenantless house  
On the reed-plain  
Must with an easy heart  
Fall in the wind.†

(*Shu-i-shu* 62.)

\* The Japanese year began in spring.

† Because there is no one whom their failing will grieve.

## A N O N Y M O U S

In the swampy water  
The frogs are croaking.  
The reflected image  
Of the kerria-flowers  
They are admiring down below.

(*Shu-i-shu* 71.)

## Y E K E I H O S H I

Raising in the palm of my hands  
The water of the rock-well  
That is under the pine-tree's shade,  
I think there is no such thing  
As summer in the year!

(*Shu-i-shu* 131.)

## K I Y O W A R A N O M O T O S U K E

(907-990 A.D.)

At my house  
The white dew of the chrysanthemum  
Dripping every day—  
How many life-times will it take to collect  
And turn into a pool?

(*Shu-i-shu* 184.)

## Ō N A K A T O M I Y O S H I N O B U

(CIRCA 990 A.D.)

The deer that lives  
On the evergreen mountain  
Where there are no autumn-leaves  
Can know the coming of autumn  
Only by its own cry.

(*Shu-i-shu* 190.)

## KIYOWARA NO FUKUYABU

(TENTH CENTURY)

Because river-fog  
Hiding the mountain-base  
High has risen,  
The autumn mountain looks  
As though it were hanging in the sky.

(*Shu-i-shu* 202.)

## KINO TSURAYUKI

That time I went to see my Sister  
Whom I loved unendurably,  
The winter night's  
River-wind was so cold  
That the plovers screamed with pain.

(*Shu-i-shu* 224.)

## KINO TSURAYUKI

(CIRCA 900)

The sins that I have piled about me  
Since the year began  
May they melt together with  
The white snow that is falling  
So thick that the room is dark!

(*Shu-i-shu* 258.)

## HITOMARO

(ATTRIBUTED TO)

In the ocean of the sky  
Wave-clouds are rising,  
And the ship of the moon  
Seems to be rowing along  
Through a forest of stars.

(*Shu-i-shu* 488.)

H I T O M A R O

(ATTRIBUTED TO)

When, halting suddenly in front of it, I look  
At the image that is in the depths  
Of my clear mirror,  
“Who,” I ask, “is this unknown old gentleman  
Advancing towards me?”

(*Shu-i-shu* 565.)

T A I R O N O K A N E M O R I

(CIRCA 950)

Though I try to hide it,  
This love of mine  
Shows in my face,  
So that people are always asking:  
“Have you something on your mind?”

(*Shu-i-shu* 622.)

A N O N Y M O U S

At each note  
Of the mountain-temple's  
Evening bell,  
How sad to hear  
That to-day too is done.

(*Shu-i-shu* 1329.)

A N O N Y M O U S

In this world  
Were there no ox-cart,\* how should we escape  
From the burning mansion of our thoughts?

(*Shu-i-shu* 1331.)

\* The reference is to a famous Buddhist parable. Some children were in a burning house. Intent on their play they could not be induced to leave the building, till their father lured them out by the promise that they would find little toy-carts awaiting them. In reality there was a big coach outside, ready to drive them away. So Buddha by partial truths lures men from the burning house of their worldly preoccupations.

I Z U M I S H I K U B U

(CIRCA 1000 A.D.)

Out of the dark  
Into a dark path  
I now must enter  
Shine on me from afar,  
Moon of the mountain-fringe! \*

(*Shu-i-shu* 1342.)

T S U M O R I K U N I M O T O

(1023-1103 A.D.)

The wild geese returning  
Through the misty sky—  
Behold they look like  
A letter written  
In faded ink!

(*Go-ju-i-shu* 71.)

\* Buddha is often compared to the moon that rises over the mountain and lightens the traveller's path. The poem is said to have been made by Shikubu on her death-bed.

H O R I   K A W A

*Doubt*

Will he be true to me?  
That I do not know.  
But since the dawn  
I have had as much disorder in my thoughts  
As in my black hair.

*E. Powys Mathers.*

A C O U R T E Z A N O F N A G A S A K I

*Looking at the Moon*

Very far from your eyes  
My loving eyes regard  
The sky of stars.  
Ah, that the moon might be  
Changed to a mirror.

*E. Powys Mathers.*

I D Z U M I - S I K I - B U

(TENTH CENTURY)

*Last Time*

One more time  
Before I quit the world  
I want to see you,  
Your face of love, O my love.  
To carry with me down there.

*E. Powys Mathers.*

## JAPANESE PASTORALS

Y O N E   N O G U C H I

### *The Sunflower*

"Thou burstest from mood:  
Marvel of thy every atom burning in life,  
How fully thou livest!  
Passionate lover of sunlight,  
Symbol of youth and pride;  
What absorption of thy life's memory,  
Wonder of thy consciousness,—  
Mighty sense of thy existence!"

### *A Lone Pine Tree*

I heard you singing in chorus with the birds yesterday,  
Last evening, too, I heard you singing together with the moon,  
I saw how your burning rhythm of fire  
Fused with minds of others into a piece of perfect song.  
Your modest bearing, your discerning knowledge of the others,  
Your power of self-criticism is beautiful indeed.  
(I am but a fragment of flesh, I confess, when facing Nature.)  
Ah, lone pine tree at the summit,  
You will readily take part in singing at any time,  
With a stream or clouds or even a rock out of shape,  
As with birds or moon.  
(I feel ashamed I am only a wilful human being fastidious in  
choice.)

Today under the blue sky where not one bird flies,  
You are singing all alone, . . .  
Ah, you are a soloist of ringing voice!

(See Note 18.)

I see for the first time your beauty reaching the climax,  
When listening to your solo.  
There's dignity of independence in your bearing as a soloist,  
That is reared in the divine air of solitude and silence.  
Ah, solo that makes you only to be yourself,  
Ah, your solo ringing in silver voice,  
What a solemn glory I feel,  
What a tear-inspiring emotion I receive!  
One's individuality is more or less impaired in chorus with the  
others,  
But in solo we find a perfect expression of self.  
Ah, lone pine tree at the summit,  
Your worth as a soloist  
Makes me understand a silence and solitude.  
How I wish to earn a dignity of independence that is all my own!  
Let me listen from a distance to your solo,  
Lone pine tree, my beloved,  
Sing! Sing!

### *The Korin Design*

I awake from sleep in the morning. Lifting up my head,  
I see my child of three years old, whom my wife is helping with her  
Chanchan.  
(A muslin coat with Korin's design of plovers amid the whirl-  
pools.)  
With such a frame of mind as to pay a debt of two hundred years  
back,  
I thank Korin for his art from under my bedclothes.  
My wife and child vanish out of sight,  
The splits of the ceiling, too, disappear, of which I often wearied  
while lying down, . . .  
But there's under my eyes the immense expanse of water.  
Voiceless large swells painted in ultramarine,  
Small waves with the lines of gold.  
Oh, such a docile sea like Hashirimizu, a sea once Ototachibana \*  
pacified with her charm,

\* It is one of the mythological stories of Japan that the princess Ototachibana drowned herself in the sea of Hashirimian to ensure a safe voyage for her husband.

With the heavy smooth skins of wonder wrapping up a terrible power,

Where I can walk, I fancied, quite safely.

Then I will be a Ferdinand who crossed the waters with his dress dry,

Korin, a wizard who drew this sea, is nobody but a Prospero.

"Oh, Prospero may, Korin," I was about to exclaim,

When my child of three years old opened softly the sliding-screen,  
Saying, "Get up, Papa, breakfast's ready!"

I fix my eyes on the Changhan my child wears, . . .

Lo, the plovers increasing to tens, twenties, hundreds,

And growing at once as large as kites,

Then falling down to the wave-mats in the color of ultramarine,  
As if the fallen petals of flowers in silver or gold.

### *The Sea*

Stay a little longer, my friend, talk with me,

I will be glad to ride across the sea of your talk,—

There are a myriad eyes of the sea-water shining bright, toward  
the sun,

(You glide, you fly in your talk,)

A large blue wind that blows broadwise in the air,

Some light-hearted dolphins startling people by their leap,

(You glide, you fly in your talk,)

There are the sprays that beat against our faces,

Then, a dreary grief of one away from the home land,

(Even your talk cannot conceal your loneliness,)

How my heart goes up and down with the moving ship,

Alas, I get sea-sick in the sea of your talk,

I cannot stand to stay on deck, I withdraw myself into my cabin,

And I sleep.

If I fall before your talk is over, my friend, will you forgive me?

My body is tired.

You see there is a piece of candle. Please light it,

And find your way toward the front door along a passage.

*The Morning-Glory*  
*(A Dramatic Fragment)*

PRIEST

“Who is the guide in Life’s chartless field?  
See the black robes of the priest for the changeless love of the  
Lord  
(The robe is black, as black night, with mercy’s depth):  
I count my rosary, I count the sins of the world and life;  
My prayer is the evening-bell to turn them to rest.  
My face is ever turned to joy and the West—  
To the West, where lies Heaven, the only real place.  
’Tis mine to make the suffering souls obedient to Law and Truth,  
And then regain the song of dissolution and rest.  
What is the flower that I see before my eyes?  
Is it not the Morning-Glory, the flower of Summer’s dream and  
dews?  
It is strange to see it now when Autumn’s silence  
Has calmed down the fire and heart of Nature and song;  
It is like a lyric forgotten and unsung—  
Villager, tell me what flower it is.”

VILLAGER

“Father, it is none other than the Morning-Glory.”

PRIEST

“Is it the custom here to see it blooming under the pale October  
sky?”

VILLAGER

“No, father. It is the first time I have seen it.”

PRIEST

“See the tremor of the cup of the flower, as if it fears to exist;  
Oh, bareness of beauty that has soared out of life;  
Is it a real morning-glory?  
Is it not only imagination or pain itself?  
I hear in its tremor a certain human speech, but voiceless.

What a mystery, what mournfulness, what tragic thrill!  
I am a priest for whom stones and grasses prepare a nightly bed,  
A companion of water, trees, stars, and night;  
Here will I sleep and solve the mystery with the power of prayer.  
Oh, flower, whatever name thou bearest, take me this night as  
thy guest."

[*The villager goes out. It becomes dark; the first night-bell rings. The priest recites the holy words. The lady enters as a waft of autumnal wind.*]

LADY

"How my heart burns in madness and pain:  
Oh, misery to be a prey to fire and unrest!  
I am a wandering spirit of discontent from Hades,  
After the Life that ascends, the life of whiteness and the sun;  
Oh, my hatred of dissolution and death!"

PRIEST

"Who art thou, lady? Thou seemest to be a soul dead, but not  
dead,  
Curser of Nirvana, straying soul of unrest."

LADY

"Father, I am the spirit of the Morning-Glory."

PRIEST

"Dear child of dews and summer's impulse,  
Why wanderest thou as a spirit of malice and evil?"

LADY

"I crave for the longer life of the many other flowers  
That have only to grow with the sun and the day:  
Oh, shortness of my life that ended before its day began!  
How I long to feel the joy of life and the sun that was not mine!"

PRIEST

"Poor child, there is no life where is no death:  
Death is nothing but the turn or change of note.

The shortest life is the sweetest, as is the shortest song;  
How to die well means how to live well.  
Life is no quest of longevity and days:  
Where are the flowers a hundred years old?  
Oh, live in death and Nirvana, live in dissolution and rest,  
Make a life out of death and darkness;  
Lady or flower, be content, be finished as a song that is sung!"

LADY

"Happy am I to hear such words, holy father,  
Lady or flower, be content, be finished as a song that is sung!"

PRIEST

"Namu, amida butsu. . . ."

[*The lady disappears at once into the Morning-Glory. The moon rises. The flower withers. The midnight bell rings.*]

*Yone Noguchi.*

T S U R A Y U K I

*Maple Leaves\**

The Maple leaves, that on the Mountain height  
Change, flame, and fall with no man near to see,  
Are like some richly-wrought Brocade at Night,  
Loveliness lost in sad obscurity.

*Kinussa, and Charlotte M. A. Peake.*

N A K A M U R A   K A T S U T O M O

*A Death Reverie*

'Tis very white, a frosty white and cold,  
This Skull that in the Winter moonlight gleams!  
Success and failure, Hope and Fear, and Dreams  
Are Nothing when our Tale of Life is Told.

Soon for dear Honour's sake my stainless sword  
Shall give this worthless body up to Death;  
Yet when my bosom is bereft of breath  
My Red Heart's faithfulness shall guard my Lord.

*Kinussa, and Charlotte M. A. Peake.*

A Z U M I   R Y O S A I

*The Old Examiner*

By Sumida's fair stream the Cherries blow,  
And, fairer than the Blossoms on the bough,  
The smiling troops of dark-eyed maidens go.  
A weighty counsel I would give you now:

\* From *Sword and Blossom Poems*, London.

I counsel you to turn your steps aside  
When cherries bloom by Sumida's blue tide.

What time the Autumn Moons in splendour show  
Turning to gold the ripples of the stream,  
Whiter than moonlight, purer than the snow  
A girl's fair face will through the darkness gleam;  
I counsel you to mind your books at home,  
Nor by the river's moonlight shores to roam.

'Twas by long effort in the days of old  
The Sages won to Wisdom and to Fame.  
Think you that you have leisure to behold  
Moonlight and Blossoms? Nay, but by the same  
Hard Road the Sages travelled you must wend,  
If you desire to gain the self-same End.

For thirty years have these dim eyes of mine  
Pored over Student's Theses, noting well  
Where seemed the light of knowledge best to shine,  
Who pressed along the path, who failed and fell.  
And watched careers, ambitions, efforts, powers,  
Ruined by Moonlight, spoiled by Cherry Flowers.

*Kinussa, and Charlotte M. A. Peake.*

[See Notes 19-20.]

### GONNOSKÉ KOMAI

#### *Love's Librarian*

My narrow mind  
Has scarcely room  
To hold the shelves  
On which I hoard  
The records of our loving prattle—  
The library of our sweet folly.

*William N. Porter.*

### *A Spring Morning*

Are these flowers a mist?  
Or is this a mist of flowers?  
Of what an unimagined blend  
Is this Spring morning made.

*William N. Porter.*

### *Butterfly*

Daintily gamboling Butterfly,  
Nodding at Bud and flirting with Blossom,  
A Flower midst the flowers of my garden you go.  
But none of these joy-flattered Flow'rets can know  
If you'll perch on her Bosom—  
Or leave her to sigh.

*William N. Porter.*

### *The Temple Bell*

Oh, how calmly chants  
The ancient Bell of our Uyéno Temple:  
What are these, noiselessly borne hither  
By the echoes, sweet and soothing?  
Ding . . . dong . . . ding . . .  
Is it a cherry petal or a butterfly,  
Or the voiceful spirit of Japan's own flower?

*William N. Porter.*

### *Cherry-Blooms*

What is it I see in this dim-lit Spring evening?  
A flight of warm snowflakes o'erfilling my garden?  
'Tis our Cherry-Blooms stealing away from their Mothers  
To flirt and to dance with the mischievous Winds.

*William N. Porter.*

### *To the Lotus-Bloom*

Though buried deep  
In the Slime of the Pool,

Unstained and untouched  
You come forth to the World  
Glorious in Beauty,  
Pure and serene:

Yet in your Innocence  
Oft you deceive us  
Transforming the dew  
On your life-giving leaves  
Into sparkling gems!

*William N. Porter.*

### *Azalea*

Far below the ancient Temple  
On the bold Arisiyama  
In my distant, loved Japan,  
Prodigal in lovely blossoms  
Of the world-famed Cherry-trees,  
And along the winding banks  
Of the roaring Hozu Rapids,  
Clings the soft Azalea,  
Creeping ever, ever nearer  
To her love—the Nightingale—  
Unrestrained in crimson tears  
That glow flaming o'er the torrent  
Thundering through the rocky gorge.

*William N. Porter.*

### *Fuji-Yama*

Rejoicing Hermits climb upon this mighty peak above the clouds,  
The sacred Dragons older grow in this deep pool beyond the sky:  
The everlasting snow is white as the white silks of her I love;  
Smoke drifts along the mountain-side as 'twere her wafted veil;  
While peerless Fuji's form recalls her white unfolded fan  
Reversed to the rejected Earth from the Far Eastern Sky.

*William N. Porter.*

FROM THE MANYOSHŪ

I

I found plum-blossoms laden with the snow  
Ere Spring had graced the land;  
But when I sought to pluck them for you, lo!  
They melted in my hand.

II

Wistaria pours at last its waves of bloom  
Along the lintel of my door . . .  
Planted long since for joy when one should come  
Who comes no more.

III

O cherry-flowers, in perfect beauty dight,  
I fain would bid you fall and die to-day . . .  
So should your lovers' worship of you stay  
Forever at the height.

IV

If cherry-blossoms in their pride  
Covered the far-flung mountain-side  
Day after day, the Summer through,  
Should we praise them as we do?

V

This life—a vision of the Seeing Mind:  
White sails, far out, catching the light at dawn,  
Glimpsed for a moment, then forever gone  
Leaving no trace behind.

*Curtis Hidden Page.*

H I T O M A R O

*After the Death of His Wife*

Through early Autumn woods I seek alone  
By paths too quickly strewn with gold and red  
The hidden forest-ways she wanders on,  
Unseen, beyond some turning just ahead.

Even though the frost should fall to-night  
And turn my sloe-black locks to white,  
I still will wait for you  
The long night through.

Plum-blossoms came to me in dream, and said:  
“Behold, are we not fair? How can you think  
To let us fall to earth and vainly fade?  
Nay, strew us in your saké-cup, and drink.”

*Curtis Hidden Page.*

B Y T H E L A D Y O F K A S A

*To Otomo no Takamochi*

The bell that biddeth all men sleep  
Maketh me wake, and keep,  
My prince, for thee,  
Vigils of memory.

\* \* \*

It well may be that I  
Deserve your scorn and hate . . .  
But the flowering tree at my gate,  
How can you pass it by?

\* \* \*

At earliest dawn I wake . . .  
And cannot sleep again for any sake!  
Alack! what can one do  
To still the shrill cuckoo?

\* \* \*

I must go to some land  
Where no cuckoos are . . .

It so racks me with longing  
Their song to hear.

*Curtis Hidden Page.*

*In Praise of Saké*

Have done with thinking  
And serious airs.  
Far better is drinking  
To banish cares.

How wise was he  
Of that former age  
Who gave to saké  
The name of "Sage."

Saké, the Seven  
Wise Men held,  
Was the gift of Heaven  
In days of old.

If in new lives yet  
New things we must be,  
Then a saké-jar for me!  
Well-soaked I'd get.

Damned be the prigs  
Who will not drink!  
Such men, I think,  
Are but apes or pigs!

All jewel-treasure  
That shines by night  
Gives less of pleasure  
And pure delight

Than a saké-cup  
When you drink it up,  
Or a true good fellow  
That hath no fears  
Of getting mellow  
Even to tears.

*Curtis Hidden Page.*

S A I G Y O

*Before An Ancestral Shrine*

Though I know not at all  
If any spirit deign to keep  
This shrine, I worship here, and weep.

\* \* \*

The moon pursues its destined shining way  
Untouched by any earthly care or woe. . . .  
Do thou, my heart, throughout life's little day  
Be even so.

\* \* \*

The changeful moon dropped suddenly  
Behind the westward hills to-night. . . .  
Ah! would that I might follow it, and see  
The eternal light.

\* \* \*

Since well I know  
That everything which seems  
Real, is *not* so. . . .  
Must I not also know  
Dreams are not dreams?

*Curtis Hidden Page.*

FROM JAPANESE LYRICS

*The River of Heaven*

TRANSLATED BY LAFCADIO HEARN

SHE SPEAKS

He is coming, my long-desired lord, whom I have been waiting to meet here, on the banks of the River of Heaven. . . . The moment of loosening my girdle is nigh.\*

Over the Rapids of the Everlasting Heaven, floating in his boat, my lord will doubtless deign to come to me this very night.

Though winds and clouds to either bank may freely come or go, between myself and my far-away spouse no message whatever may pass.

To the opposite bank one might easily fling a pebble; yet, being separated from him by the River of Heaven, alas! to hope for a meeting (except in autumn) is utterly useless.

From the day that the autumn wind began to blow (I kept saying to myself), "Ah! when shall we meet?"—but now my beloved, for whom I waited and longed, has come indeed!

Though the waters of the River of Heaven have not greatly risen (yet, to cross), this near stream and to wait upon my lord and lover remains impossible.

HE SPEAKS

Though she is so near that the waving of her (long) sleeves can be distinctly seen, yet there is no way to cross the stream before the season of autumn.

\* Lovers, ere parting, were wont to tie each other's inner girdle (*himo*) and pledge themselves to leave the knot untouched until the time of their next meeting.

When we were separated, I had seen her for a moment only,—and dimly as one sees a flying midge; now I must vainly long for her as before, until time of our next meeting!

SHE SPEAKS

Methinks that Hikoboshi must be rowing his boat to meet his wife,—for a mist (as of oar-spray) is rising over the course of the Heavenly Stream.

While awaiting my lord on the misty shore of the River of Heaven, the skirts of my robe have somehow become wet.

On the River of Heaven, at the place of the august ferry, the sound of the water has become loud: perhaps my long-awaited lord will soon be coming in his boat.

HE SPEAKS

As Tanabata (slumbers) with her long sleeves rolled up, until the reddening of the dawn, do not, O storks of the river-shallows, awaken her by your cries.

(She sees that) a mist is spreading across the River of Heaven. . . . “To-day, to-day,” she thinks, “my long-awaited lord will probably come over in his boat.”

By the ferry of Yasu, on the River of Heaven, the boat is floating: I pray you tell my beloved that I stand here and wait.

Though I (being a Star-god) can pass freely to and fro, through the great sky,—yet to cross over the River of Heaven, for your sake, was weary work indeed!

From the august Age of the God-of-Eight-Thousand-Spears, she had been my spouse in secret only; yet now, because of my constant longing for her, our relation has become known to man.

From the time when heaven and earth were parted, she has been my own wife;—yet, to be with her, I must always wait till autumn.

SHE SPEAKS

With my beloved, of the ruddy-tinted cheeks, this night indeed will I descend into the bed of the River of Heaven, to sleep on a pillow of stone.

When I see the water-grasses of the River of Heaven bend in the autumn wind (I think to myself): "The time (for our meeting) seems to have come."

When I feel in my heart a sudden longing for my husband, then on the River of Heaven the sound of the rowing of the night-boat is heard, and theplash of the oars resounds.

HE SPEAKS

In the night when I am reposing with my (now) far-away spouse, having exchanged jewel-pillows \* with her, let not the cock crow, even though the day should dawn.

Though for a myriad ages we should remain hand-in-hand and face to face, our exceeding love could never come to an end. (Why then should Heaven deem it necessary to part us?)

The white cloth which Tanabata has woven for my sake, in that dwelling of hers, is now, I think, being made into a robe for me.

Though she be far-away, and hidden from me by five hundred layers of white cloud, still shall I turn my gaze each night toward the dwelling-place of my younger sister (wife).

When autumn comes, and the river-mists spread over the Heavenly Stream, I turn toward the river (and long); and the nights of my longing are many!

But once in the whole year, and only upon the seventh night (of the seventh month), to meet the beloved person—and lo! The day has dawned before our mutual love could express (or "satisfy") itself!

\* A poetical phrase signifying the use of each other's arms as pillows.

SHE SPEAKS

The love-longing of one whole year having ended to-night,  
every day from to-morrow I must again pine for him as before.

Hikoboshi and Tanabata-tsumé are to meet each other to-night;  
—ye waves of the River of Heaven, take heed that ye do not rise!

HE SPEAKS

Oh! that white cloud driven by the autumn-wind—can it be  
the heavenly hire \* of Tanabata-tsumé?

SHE SPEAKS

Because he is my not-often-to-be-met beloved, hasten to row  
the boat across the River of Heaven ere the night be advanced.

Late in the night, a mist spreads over the River of Heaven; and  
the sound of the oar of Hikoboshi is heard.

On the River of Heaven a sound of plashing can be distinctly  
heard: is it the sound of the rippling made by Hikoboshi quickly  
rowing his boat?

Perhaps this evening shower is but the spray (flung down) from  
the oar of Hikoboshi, rowing his boat in haste.

From to-morrow, alas! after having put my jewel-bed in order,  
no longer reposing with my lord, I must sleep alone!

HE SPEAKS

The wind having risen, the waves of the river have become high;  
—this night cross over in a row-boat, I pray thee, before the hour  
be late!

SHE SPEAKS

Even though the waves of the River of Heaven run high, I must  
row over quickly, before it becomes late in the night.

\* Scarf.

Long ago I finished weaving the material; and, this evening, having finished sewing the garment for him—(why must) I still wait for my lord?

Is it that the current of the River of Heaven (has become too) rapid? The jet-black night advances—and Hikoboshi has not come!

Oh, ferryman, make speed across the stream!—my lord is not one who can come and go twice in a year!

On the very day that the autumn-wind began to blow, I set out for the shallows of the River of Heaven;—I pray you, tell my lord that I am waiting here still!

#### HE SPEAKS

Methinks Tanabata must be coming in her boat; for a cloud is even now passing across the clear face of the moon.\*

\* Perhaps the legend of Tanabata, as it was understood by these old poets, can make but a faint appeal to Western minds. Nevertheless, in the silence of transparent nights, before the rising of the moon, the charm of the ancient tales sometimes descends upon me, out of the scintillant sky,—to make me forget the monstrous facts of Science, and the stupendous horror of Space. Then I no longer behold the Milky Way as that awful Ring of the Cosmos, whose hundred million suns are powerless to lighten the Abyss, but as the very Amanogawa itself,—the River Celestial. I see the thrill of its shining stream, and the mists that hover along its verge, and the water-grasses that bend in the winds of autumn. White Orihime—I see at her starry loom, and the Ox that grazes on the farther shore; and I know that the falling dew is the spray from the Herdsman's oar. And the heaven seems very near and warm and human; and the silence about me is filled with the dream of a love unchanging, immortal,—forever yearning and forever young, and forever left unsatisfied by the paternal wisdom of the gods.

LAFCADIO HEARN.

#### *The Ballad of O-Shichi, the Daughter of the Yaoya*

In the autumn the deer are lured within reach of the hunters by the sounds of the flute, which resemble the sounds of the voices of their mates,—and so are killed.

Almost in like manner, one of the five most beautiful girls in Yedo, whose comely face charmed all the capital even as the spring-blossoming of cherry trees, cast away her life in the moment of blindness caused by love.

When, having wrought a vain thing, she was brought before the Mayor of the City of Yedo, that high official questioned the young criminal, asking:—"Are you not O-Shichi, the daughter of the *yaoya*? \* And being so young, how came you to commit such a dreadful crime as incendiaryism?"

Then O-Shichi, weeping and wringing her hands, made this answer:—"Indeed that was the only crime that I ever committed; and I had no extraordinary reason for it, but this:

"Once before, when there had been a great fire—so great a fire that nearly all Yedo was consumed,—our house also was burned down. And we three—my parents and I,—knowing no other where to go, took shelter in a Buddhist temple, to remain there until our house could be rebuilt.

"Surely the destiny that draws two young persons to each other is hard to understand! . . . In that temple there was a young acolyte, and love grew up between us.

"In secret we met together, and promised never to forsake each other,—and we pledged ourselves to each other by sucking blood from small cuts we made in our little finger, and by exchanging written vows that we should love each other forever.

"Before our pillows had yet become fixed † our new house in Honoo was built and made ready for us.

"But from that day when I bade a sad farewell to Kichizisa-ma whom I had pledged myself for the time of two existences, never was my heart consoled by even one letter from the acolyte.

\* *Yaoya*, a seller of vegetables.

† This curious expression can only be understood by help of the fact that lovers are said to exchange pillows. Thus the pillows may be confused. "While the pillows were yet not definite or fixed," would mean, therefore, while the two lovers were still in the habit of seeking each other at night.

"Alone in my bed at night, I used to think and think, and at last in a dream there came to me the dreadful idea of setting fire to the house,—as the only means of again being able to meet my beautiful lover.

"Then, one evening I got a bundle of dry rushes, and placed inside it some pieces of live charcoal, and I secretly put the bundle into a shed at the back of the house.

"A fire broke out, and there was a great tumult, and I was arrested and brought here—oh! how dreadful it was.

"I will never, never commit such a fault again. But whatever happens, O pray save me, my *Bugyo!*—O pray take pity on me!"

Ah! the simple apology! But what was her age?—not twelve?—not thirteen?—not fourteen? Fifteen comes after fourteen. Alas! she was fifteen and could not be saved!

Therefore O-Shichi was sentenced according to the law. But first she was bound with strong cords, and was for seven days exposed to public view on the bridge called Nihonbashi. Ah! what a piteous sight it was!

Her aunts and cousins,—even Bekurai and Kakusuke, the house servants, had often to wring their sleeves,—so wet were their sleeves with tears.

But because the crime could not be forgiven, O-Shichi was bound to four posts, and fuel was kindled, and the fire rose up! . . . And poor Shichi in the midst of that fire.

Even so the insects of summer fly to the flame.

H O M E I I W A N O \*

*Yearning for Spring*

“ ’Tis too sweet—ah, the joy of the world,  
Spring joins with the road of dream; what a vision  
(Light mist afar, sleeping flowers anear)  
Goes round my spirit’s eyes.

“Let me bid my careless love adieu,  
Under the window the slender rains fall on;  
My yearning of the springing passion  
Would live in the breeze under the cloudy sky.”

*Yone Noguchi.*

*“Tankyoku”*

“Holding a stone which has no voice,  
I cry my world away with tears;  
'Tis not for love as the other people say,  
'Tis not for the pain which I suffer most,  
'Tis more than my pain and love;  
My flesh of burning thoughts will burn,  
And my hot tears alone run down,  
When the loneliness in my bosom comes to flow.  
Nor God nor Death is in me;  
If there is a thing, 'tis this loneliness:  
Now I am a prey of my own life,  
And cry away this endless world with the stone;  
It bears silence eternally growing,  
And I pour on it my own tears.”

*Yone Noguchi.*

\* A minor poet of contemporary Japan.

## SOME UTA SPECIMENS

SAIGYO HOSHI

“The moon has nothing to make  
Me think and cry,  
But, alas, my own tears alone  
Do lament and fall.”

*Yone Noguchi.*

SHIKISHI NAISHINNO

“Oh, thread of my life,  
Be torn off now if it must!  
I fear in longer life  
My secret would be hard to keep.”

*Yone Noguchi.*

IMPUKU MONIN NO OSUKE

“I might show thee  
How the Oshima island fishers’ sleeves  
Never change their tints, though wet through.  
But, alas, tearful sleeves of mine!”\*

*Yone Noguchi.*

GOKYOKOKU SESSHO SAKINO DAJODAIJIN

“List, the crickets sing!  
Upon the mat of the frost-night,  
I, my raiment not yet unbound,  
Have to sleep alone.”

*Yone Noguchi.*

NYUDO SAKINO DAJODAIJIN

“ ’Tis not the stormy snow  
Luring the garden flower  
But what is falling fast  
Is nothing but my own self.”

\* The tears of a woman.

### *The East to the West*

(Remarks of a Japanese Scholar rendered into verse from Lafcadio Hearn's  
"Unfamiliar Japan")

You, of the West, still ask the "Eternal Why?"  
Probing the mist-wreaths of religious thought.  
We, of the East, have sounded depth on depth,  
Only to find beneath the deeper depths  
Still others, dark, unfathomed and profound!  
Out to the farthest limits thought can reach,  
Through Buddhism we voyaged—but to see  
Ever the far horizon, far recede.  
As children playing by a little stream,  
Familiar with the still dark pools that lie  
Beneath the willows, and the flattening whirl  
Of waters, a sharp gust sends shivering by,  
And all the noisy babble over stones,  
With the white foam of miniature cascades.  
These for a thousand years you played with, knew—  
But of the bourne to which that streamlet runs  
Knew not. And only now, by winding paths  
Different to ours, you reach the Ocean's shore,  
And stand like startled children, all amaze!  
To you, the vastness is a wonder new,  
And you would sail to—nowhere—since you saw  
The Infinite across the sands of Time!

*Lafcadio Hearn.*

### *The River of Souls*

(From Prose Version of Buddhist Wasau by Lafcadio Hearn)

In the pale grey Land of Meido,  
At the foot of Shidé mountain,  
From the River of Souls' dry bed  
    Rises the murmur of voices,  
    The prattle of baby-voices,  
    The accents of early childhood.

Not of this world is their sorrow,  
Not as the crying of children  
Heard on this earth, but how mournful!  
    Plaint of their pitiful longing,  
    Yearning for home and for parents.  
“Father! so longed for—O Father!  
Mother Belovèd, O Mother!”  
    Wail from the River of Souls.

Sad is the task they endeavour,  
Gathering stones from the river,  
    Heaps for the Towers of Prayer.

Building the first Tower, and praying  
The Gods to shower blessings on Father;  
Piling the second, imploring  
The Gods to shower blessings on Mother;  
Heaping the third Tower, and pleading  
For Brother and Sister, and dear ones.

Such day by day their employment.  
Piteous, piercing the marrow  
The tale of their sorrowful task.

But when the sunset approaches  
Then appear demons, demanding  
“What is this work you are doing?  
Think you your parents still living  
Care for your service or offering?  
Hopeless they weep and bewail you,  
Mourn for you, morning till evening.

Thus all the sorrows you suffer  
Come from the grief of your parents  
Resenting the will of the gods!  
So blame not us, but your parents!”

Then the fierce demons demolish  
The fruits of the little ones’ labour.  
Hurling the stones with their bludgeons,  
Deaf to the wailing and tears.

Swift to the sorrowing children,  
Jizō comes softly, “the Teacher,”  
“Shining King”—beaming in pity,  
Gently he comes to console them.

“Be not afraid, little dear ones,  
You were so little to come here,  
All the long journey to Meido!

I will be Father and Mother,  
Father and Mother and Playmate  
To all little children in Meido!”

Then he caresses them kindly,  
Folding his shining robes round them,  
Lifting the smallest and frailest  
Into his bosom, and holding  
His staff for the stumblers to clutch.

To his long sleeves cling the infants,  
Smile, in response to his smiling,  
Glad in his beauteous compassion.

Jizō the Diamond of Pity!  
Jizō the little ones’ God!

*Lafcadio Hearn.*

## *The Neighbors Help Him Build His House*

(*A Japanese Folk-Chant*)

### A YOUNG MAN SINGS

Out come the leaves,  
The long green leaves  
Of the young pine-tree in spring—  
So may the days,  
The growing days,  
Yield you everything.

### THE OTHERS

As part is true  
May the rest be true,  
True in the heart of the spring!

### AN OLD MAN SINGS

Blest be the house,  
Honored the house,  
May a woman's womb, adored,  
Which was Buddha's house  
And Shaka's house,  
Here be the house of the Lord.

### THE OTHERS

As part is true  
May the rest be true  
And here be the house of the Lord!

*Witter Bynner.*

[See Note 21.]



III  
IMITATIONS



### *Carvings of Cathay*

All the world was near to-day . . .  
The waves were carvings of Cathay  
Thrown and broken at my feet,  
And these old desert-sands were sweet  
With dead pagodas, buried tiles  
And ocean-grass for miles and miles.

Every little tuft of green  
Was a brush-stroke on a screen,  
Mounds and dunes make a redoubt  
Good for keeping Tartars out,  
And a temple-cloud was dim  
At the sea's imperial rim.

This, the ocean I was on,  
Confucius witnessed from T'ai-Shan,  
The knees of Buddha made the sign  
Of calm that I composed with mine,  
And as many as the sands  
Were Kwan-Yin's mercies and her hands.

I could hear a dragon-whelp  
Mewling in a maze of kelp,  
Gulls, with turnings, flashes, flares,  
Filled with wind like paper prayers,  
And capping me, like Him, from sun,  
The snails of thought crawled one by one.

*Witter Bynner.*

### *Through a Gateway in Japan*

A torii stood, three miles above the bay,  
A gate of sacred ground,

And when I wandered through a little way,  
I paused and found

No temple-steps, no lanterns and no shrine,  
Only divinity—  
The solitary presence of a pine  
Facing the sea.

*Witter Bynner.*

### *Japanese Notes*

#### IN THE HOUSE OF LAFCADIO HEARN

I left my name to-day  
Before him and Buddha,  
And knelt among his books,  
And had tea with his wife and two children  
And bowed low to them . . .  
And then in his garden,  
When his wife picked for me the petals I wished,  
His son said,  
“But he liked the maple best,”  
And brought me a spray of young leaves.

#### IN THE YOSHIWARA

She sat as white as moonlight  
When the sea is still.  
She moved as bright as moonlight  
When the sea wrestles with the shore.

#### IN A TEMPLE

This was the fortune I was told:  
If you work hard all the time,  
Good-luck will attend you like a steady wind.

#### IN A THEATRE

As the wooden blocks clack  
For the curtain to rise,  
Step after step I hear his wooden clogs

Clacking through the night to my door,  
For the curtain of my heart to rise  
On my own actor,  
My beloved.

IN A POEM

This night last year,  
An old woman dusted the paper shutter  
Very carefully,  
That the shadow of the pine-tree  
Might be quite perfect.

IN A PAINTING

I have guided you many a day  
Up the infinite mountain.  
And you have not seen till now,  
At the summit,  
That the mountain is made of skulls.  
Are you asking me whose?  
Your own!

*Witter Bynner.*

*In Kamakura*

In Kamakura, near the great Diabutsu,  
When I had sat a long time on the ground  
And been gathered up, forgetful of my face and form,  
Into the face and form of endless dream,  
I found among the booths a little pendant Buddha  
With the steel of a round mirror for His halo . . .

So that a brooding head still intervenes in bronze  
Between my face and the image of my face,  
And I cannot see myself and not see Him.

*Witter Bynner.*

O R I G I N A L

*To a Japanese Mask*

No man, yet more than man;  
Unafraid of time;  
Mask of mortality,  
Fixing a poignant mood,  
A terrible grimace,  
For centuries!  
The fleet reality of flesh  
Becomes apparent  
Beside your lasting unreality.  
You are final!  
Thus a moment, frozen,  
Penetrates the future,  
Making horror beautiful,  
Making man a god.

*Glenn Hughes.*

*A Chinese Scroll Picture*

In the Hall of Tranquil Longevity  
Is seated the Chinese Empress,  
Mother to the Son of Heaven,  
In pearléd and flowered headdress.  
Eunuchs and palace women,  
Ceremonious women  
Magnificent in gold and silks,  
Stiff as clockwork toys  
Kneeling, rising, kow-towing—  
What are they doing?  
One after one they display  
Maidens most beautiful  
Shrinking before the throne.  
This is the Day of the Choosing,  
That an Empress be chosen for the Son of Heaven.  
He himself is not present.  
It is a trifle, for it is a woman  
Women are always trifles.

His Majesty is occupied  
In the Hall of Beneficent Wisdom.  
He receives the Ambassadors from Chosen.  
Behold the Cap of Pearls  
Upon his august Head.  
Behold the Celestial Robe  
Embroidered with Phœnix and soaring Dragon,  
And the ripple border  
Of purest gold.  
See his long fine hands  
Like smoked ivory,  
The transparent nails  
Sheathed in jeweled cases.  
The gray jade sceptre across his knees.  
His Magnificence is weary. He yawns!  
Dismiss the Ambassadors instantly!  
Now let him rest.  
Let his Celestial Empire

Murmur far off like a sea-shell.  
Here—hold! His Majesty will see pictures!  
Bring the hanging pictures; bring the scrolls.  
Bring warmed wine in a cup of pale jade  
That he may recreate his soul.

Here come the artists hurrying.  
They display their pictures,  
Painted on golden silks  
In clear bright aquarelle.

This is the work of Wu Tao—  
O beautiful the plunging waterfall  
Leaping from misty crags!  
See its gray slender lines  
Falling straight as rain  
Into the boiling pool.  
A bough of maple trembles across it  
Above is the rounding moon.  
Will it please the Son of Heaven?  
No—he yawns widely.  
It is no good. Take it away.  
Roll it up with its clinking pendants of ivory.  
Take it away!

Unscroll the picture of Li Chou.  
It may please His Augustness better.  
Behold the fighting cocks,  
White as white cranes,  
With scarlet combs and wattles.  
Their legs are black.  
They rush together,  
Their claws rend; their beaks tear,  
Dripping with blood bright on their white breasts.  
About them flutter bloody feathers.  
O fierce little warriors,  
Fiercer than fighting crickets,—  
Will you please the Son of Heaven?  
No—it is useless. He yawns.  
Take them away!

Or here—these mandarin ducks,  
Painted by Wang Tsu, the artist of birds,—  
Floating on a willow pond,  
While a fox—yes, a fox  
Peers at them from the willows.  
Aho! Beware!  
Foxes do strange things in China.  
Possibly this is a bewitched Princess.  
But no—the great Jade Emperor yawns.  
Take it away!

Ha! what is this—Kuo Hsi, the painter of women?  
To him they open their graces  
Like flowers asway on the warm south winds.  
But women are trifles  
Unworthy the Imperial attention.  
See, with a frightened air,  
He makes the Ninefold Abasement.  
He lays at the august Feet  
A box of cedar, long, straight, and narrow.  
Characters are painted upon it—  
They say—what do they say?  
“This is the Lady of Lo.”  
O what lady’s beauty lies coffined in cedar,  
Scrolled like a budding flower?  
He lifts it with delicate fingers  
Yellow and clear as amber.

Straightway the Emperor sits upright,  
On his throne of carved ivory.  
His sceptre drops;  
It falls to the ground.  
He does not yawn.  
His eyes, like quivering butterflies,  
Flit over the flower of her face.  
They are listless no longer.  
They seek the bud of her lips,  
The gray paeonies that hide her little ears.  
They wing their way  
About the pure and slender lines of her green robe.

They linger about her person.  
Yet—this is but a trifle.  
Women are always trifles.  
Can it be that trifles have their importance?  
It is only the Lady of Lo.

Cold as running water  
The Imperial eyes survey Kuo Hsi.  
Cold as tinkling ice the Imperial Voice.  
“This is but a trifle, yet it pleases our Augustness.  
It remains in the Dragon Palace.  
Reward this man according to his desires.”  
Fortunate Kuo Hsi!  
Taels of silver are heaped upon him.  
Silver that means summer gardens,  
Fighting quails, women of moonlike beauty,  
Yes—and wine honey-hearted, in crystal cups!  
To these is added a moon-pearl by the Emperor’s order—  
A pearl round and flawless as the bosom of beauty.  
Happy Kuo Hsi!  
Drunk with delight he quits the Ivory Pavilion;  
Sudden the Celestial Voice recalls him;  
Hark, the jade pendants tinkle as if with laughter.  
“Make way for the Lady of Lo.”  
Unroll the hanging picture downward  
That His Majesty may see.  
First appears satin-smooth hair,  
Black as crows in snow-fields,  
Swept upward, looped above the brows.  
Over each ear a silver paeony  
With pale rose tassels of silk.  
Then appear two eyebrows,  
Black soft silk-moths fluttering  
To the brilliance beneath—  
Two eyes  
Curved, dark and deep as the famous  
Springs of Chi Li.  
Almond blossom cheeks blooming faintly pink.  
O linger there—  
Permit the Son of Heaven to muse

Ere the marvel of the mouth be unfolded!  
Now—the mouth!  
Lips of flower-sweetness.  
Surely their music is audible.  
Listen! Was that a whisper?  
See the tiny pearls within—  
They should bite only nectarines and ripe peaches.  
Only fruit juices or rose petals should color those lips.  
O fortunate one at whom she smiles!  
But he is not in the picture.  
Only a silver peacock attends her.  
He pecks at the willow-leaf satin of her robe,  
And displays his silvers, grays, and mauves,  
And the pale moons of his train.  
It is the Lady of Lo with her tame peacock.  
It is a trifle, for it is a woman.  
It is only beauty.  
It is only the Lady of Lo!

“This is a trifle, yet even of a trifle the history should  
be known.  
Is she flower-sweet flesh, or the dream of a flower?  
Is this Lady of Lo a dream or a woman—  
Sun-flushed almond bloom blown on a wind of dawn?”

Hush—an artist may not reply to the Son of Heaven!  
Li Lung the courtier interprets smoothly  
Words that flutter abashed on the lips of Kuo Hsi.

“In the Western town of Cheng is a garden  
Shrining beauty as oysters shelter their pearls.  
There paeonies open faint blooms  
Pearly and gray and mauve, languid with perfume.  
In the ponds ripple the silver carp,  
Lifting their heads, though gasping, to see the Wonder.  
There the peacocks are silver,  
Their legs are pink, their claws pink mother-of-pearl.  
There are no colors that shout and sing,  
No gong-like orange, no trumpet-tongued red,  
No deep swooning blues!

Long wistarias trail mauve-gray garlands,  
There the veined white iris, lip-tinged with yellow,  
Grows in the warm wet nooks  
Where the runnels drip through the rocks.  
Here dwells the Lady of Lo. Graceful as a  
sheathed iris,  
Guarded by silver peacocks with fighting  
crests.  
Faint iris perfumes surround her.  
Certainly in my unworthy picture she is beautiful,  
Yet I could depict her  
But as a drunken peasant stutters the Classics!"

Run, run, messengers! Ride on swift horses  
Tasselled with shouting gold and scarlet,  
Shouting the Emperor's will.  
Swing on your shoulders the Litter,  
Glimmering with jade and malachite,  
Cushions soft as a butterfly's feathers—  
For the Empress is found—is found!  
She is the Lady of Lo.

Cheng is far, yet what matters?  
Were it the end of the earth,  
And the Empress guarded by Dragons  
Loyal legions should find her!  
Even the birds of the air  
Joining their wings should bring her.  
Say to the Empress Mother;  
"Let the assembled ladies disperse.  
Beautiful—doubtless most beautiful!  
But not the Lady of Lo."

Weeping and trembling they hasten,  
Covering their faces,  
Sad and abashed they vanish,  
Melting away one by one  
Like stars in the risen dawn.  
For with the dawn  
She comes—the Lady of Lo!

The Son of Heaven approaches.  
Truly this is a trifle.  
Women are trifles always.  
Yet—trifles have their importance.  
He comes to the Pepper Chamber  
To see this newest trifle.

Here is the Litter,  
Swaying—swaying between the bearers.  
The poles are golden,  
The curtains of rosy silk are closed,  
Yet a faint perfume caresses the nostrils  
From the hidden Flower within.  
The Emperor waits. The Empress Mother waits.  
The Litter is set down gently, the bearers retire.  
Hush—it is the Imperial Hand that opens the curtains.  
It is the Imperial Voice that speaks.  
She rises; she emerges like a blowing blossom,  
Beautiful, bending like a reed.  
But—it is only a trifle!  
It is not the Lady of Lo.  
O shame—horror!  
Heads must fall for this!  
A mistake in the Imperial Orders.  
Messengers run frantically  
Seeking Kuo Hsi.  
He cannot be found.  
The Celestial Emperor white-jade-pale,  
Gazes on the swooning lady—  
Beautiful certainly, but only a trifle.  
It is not the Lady of Lo.

Listen—hush—the Empress Mother speaks:  
“Sovereign Master and Son,  
Have you thought your Mother negligent?  
When you said: ‘Choose me an Empress,’  
did you think me indolent?  
Careless, forgetful?  
Does not the fisherman sweep the waters  
Diligently with his net lest the fish escape him?

So, with my net of sleepless eyes and hearing ears  
Have I swept the Flower Empire from end to end,  
And again and yet again.  
And I have caught my fish,  
My fish of purest gold,  
Flawless in curve and hue.  
Better the love of a mother than the zeal of  
courtiers.  
Behold—It is only a trifle.  
It is only the Lady of Lo."

Bow—bow down all.  
The Empress Mother has clapped her august hands.  
The Empress is here—she approaches.  
She enters supported by matrons,—  
High ceremonious women,—  
On delicate tottering feet.  
Pearl fringes veil her eyes,  
Silver robes fall about her  
Disclosing inner robes of pale rose as she moves.  
Wonder ul! Lovely as Fei Yen!  
Eyes half closed in rapture,  
Pale, beseeching, exquisite,  
Breathing the perfume of iris,  
She totters forward,  
Tremulous hands extended,  
And touches the Jade Sceptre  
And lays her head upon the Imperial Feet.  
A trifle certainly—but exquisite.  
This is the Lady of Lo!

Let the gongs clash and the bronze bells boom.

O hush—the clouds close about us!  
It is but a scroll picture of days long dead.  
Only a picture—Lay it away in the box.  
Were these people once real?—They are  
real no longer.  
It is a dream—we have awakened.  
It is only a trifle.  
It is only the Lady of Lo.

## *Chinese Drawings*

### A FATHER

There is a fruit, my son,  
Bitter to the taste at first  
But afterward sweet . . .  
It is called advice.

### A TEA-GIRL

When the fish-eyes of water  
Bubble into crab-eyes—  
Tea!

### A WANDERER

Last night is a thousand years ago—  
But to-morrow is a new mist.

### A LOVER

The plums and cherries are blossoming,  
My heart too is unsheathing from winter—  
And it has all happened in one day.

### A VENDOR OF ROSE-BUSHES

I am very poor,  
Any one who can buy from me  
Ought to do it.

### A PAINTER

I cannot paint  
The growth of the spirit,  
But I can paint an old man  
Watching the smoke of incense  
Join the sky.

### A LADY

She does not see the tea her servant brings  
Into the garden,  
Her hands have fallen down from the instrument  
She was playing,  
But the strings can still answer  
The cold fingers of autumn.

### A SCHOLAR

Having won his diploma,  
He rides a horse of air  
Through ten miles of the color  
Of apricot-blossoms.

### A PHILOSOPHER

What though they conquer us?  
The tea has come.  
In at most nine hundred years,  
Some one will conquer them.

### A HORSEMAN

Beyond him are many inlets curving among mountains  
And on the way a temple,  
And there is gold on the harness of his horse  
Whose head and foot are uplifted together . . .  
But the rider sits quiet now,  
As he rides toward the shadow  
Of the second willow.

### *The Chinese Horseman*

There were flutes once merry with stops  
And bottles round with wine,  
Lips dewy as with attar-drops  
And breasts of deep moonshine;  
There were thrushes in the market-rows,  
Caught from the circling air,  
And no bird sang so true as his,  
And there were hills for prayer—  
But over the bridge the rider goes,  
The rider who was fond,  
Leaving what was, crossing what is,  
By the bridge that leads beyond,  
Beyond the many songs he knew  
And sang to lips he kissed,  
Beyond the rounded green and blue,  
Beyond the mist.

And the scholar who may question him  
Will hear only the sound  
Of wind-curled waves at the river-brim  
And of willows trailing the ground,  
And will see the quiet of five bays  
Pointing like a hand  
Toward the five valleys that divide  
The long mountain-land  
Beyond the white azalea ways,  
Beyond the moonstone wave,  
Where no one may be lost nor hide  
Nor may be saved nor save,  
But where the rider may forego,  
And laugh no more nor moan,  
And of all pulses never know  
Which were his own.

*Witter Bynner.*

G E O R G E S A U R I O L

*The Harpsichord of Teddo*

UPON an old harpsichord of the time of Marie Antoinette—that has found its way, no one knows how, to the country of the Mikados—the frivolous Lou-Laou-Ti plays a love-song. Perched upon the unsteady stool, like a doll upon a stand, with head thrown back, the young girl sings softly. Her white and delicate fingers dance madly upon the yellowed ivory, then sweep very gravely over the keys of ebony, and recommence to flutter distractedly hither and thither. The harpsichord, with its clear and caressing voice, seems, under the witchery of the little fairy, to find in its old heart shudders, murmurs, and vibrations long forgotten. And that puffed dress of blue, flowered with roses, is it not of a marquise?

Oh, how their songs marvellously harmonize! Dost thou speak Japanese, centenarian clavichord? Or thou, graceful Japanese maid, dost thou know, perchance, the pretty speech of France? The pot-bellied images, dozing on their pedestals of porcelain, open astonished eyes at the unaccustomed concert, and from their stelas of bronze the familiar gods wonder what it all means.

And suddenly all the statuettes change into graceful groups of pale Saxe, and the bands of monkeys embroidered upon the silk screens become groups of rosy cupids that might have been painted by Boucher himself. And the black hair of Lou-Laou-Ti seems covered with a vapory snow.

Eh, but forgive me; it is truly a marquise that is playing there on the harpsichord; it is a marquise, for she is singing,

“Il pleut, il pleut, bergère—”

Then the heart of the old instrument warms; its tremulous chords vibrate in a supreme harmony, happy at having transformed, by their sole charm, the interior of a Japanese apartment, and at

having procured to a young woman, who can neither say *papa* nor *maman*, the great honor of singing a couplet of poor Fabre d'Eglantine, as though she had just returned from Versailles.

*Stuart Merrill, trans. from the French.*

## EPHRAIM MIKHAEL

### *The Junk*

UPON the jasper of the lake, a junk of ebony with black sails, moving without oars, opens a long wake of snow. It is towards the setting sun that it slowly goes.—Oh! so slowly that one hardly hears the rustling of its sad wings. And yet, in the calm languor of evening, I distinguish at present an immaterial sound, that is the cry exhaled by the Soul of the Junk.

The Soul of the Junk sighs, and in that strange sigh my spirit recognizes—as the senses separate two mingled odors—lassitude and dismay. For the Junk is weary of eternally seeing behind it that wake of the color of shrouds. It would fain run from it, to rest yonder near the magic palaces of red copper built by the setting sun; or else to stop silently so that the lake might spread around it like a plain of green marble.

But an imperious wind swells, without cease, its sails; and with its heavy prow the Junk itself furrows the wake that wearies and damps it.

Then a voice, so mysterious and so personal that I cannot tell whether it comes from the Junk or from my soul, murmurs in the violet air of the evening: “Ah! to see behind me no longer, on the lake of Eternity, the implacable Wake of Time!”

*Stuart Merrill, trans. from the French.*

VACHEL LINDSAY

*The Chinese Nightingale*

*A Song in Chinese Tapestries  
Dedicated to S. T. F.*

"How, how," he said. "Friend Chang," I said,  
"San Francisco sleeps as the dead—  
Ended license, lust and play:  
Why do you iron the night away?  
Your big clock speaks with a deadly sound,  
With a tick and a wail till dawn comes round.  
While the monster shadows glower and creep,  
What can be better for man than sleep?"  
"I will tell you a secret," Chang replied;  
"My breast with vision is satisfied,  
And I see green trees and fluttering wings,  
And my deathless bird from Shanghai sings."  
Then he lit five fire-crackers in a pan.  
"Pop, pop!" said the fire-crackers, "cra-cra-crack!"  
He lit a joss-stick long and black.  
Then the proud gray joss in the corner stirred;  
On his wrist appeared a gray small bird:  
And this was the song of the gray small bird:  
  
"Where is the princess, loved forever,  
Who made Chang first of the kings of men?"

And the joss in the corner stirred again;  
And the carved dog, curled in his arms, awoke,  
Barked forth a smoke-cloud that whirled and broke.  
It piled in a maze round the ironing-place,  
And there on the snowy table wide

Stood a Chinese lady of high degree,  
With a scornful, witching, tea-rose face . . .  
Yet she put away all form and pride,  
And laid her glimmering veil aside  
With a childlike smile for Chang and for me.

The walls fell back, night was aflower,  
The table gleamed in a moonlit bower,  
While Chang, with a countenance carved of stone,  
Ironed and ironed, all alone.  
And thus she sang to the busy man Chang:  
“Have you forgotten . . .  
Deep in the ages, long, long ago,  
I was your sweetheart, there on the sand—  
Storm-worn beach of the Chinese land?  
We sold our grain in the peacock town  
Built on the edge of the sea-sands brown—  
Built on the edge of the sea-sands brown . . .

“When all the world was drinking blood  
From the skulls of men and bulls,  
And all the world had swords and clubs of stone,  
We drank our tea in China, beneath the sacred spice-trees,  
And heard the curled waves of the harbor moan.  
And this gray bird, in Love’s first spring,  
With a bright bronze breast and a bronze-brown wing,  
Captured the world with his carolling.  
Do you remember, ages after,  
At last the world we were born to own?  
You were the heir of the yellow throne—  
The world was the field of the Chinese man  
And we were the pride of the sons of Han.  
We copied deep books, and we carved in jade,  
And wove white silks in the mulberry shade.” . . .

“I remember, I remember  
That Spring came on forever,  
That Spring came on forever.”  
Said the Chinese nightingale.

My heart was filled with marvel and dream  
Though I saw the western street-lamps gleam,  
Though dawn was bringing the western day,  
Though Chang was a laundryman, ironing away . . .  
Mingled there, with the streets and alleys,  
The railroad-yard, and the clock-tower bright,  
Demon-clouds crossed ancient valleys;  
Across wide lotus-ponds of light  
I marked a giant firefly's flight.

And the lady, rosy-red,  
Opened her fan, closed her fan,  
Stretched her hand toward Chang, and said:  
"Do you remember,  
Ages after,  
Our palace of heart-red stone?  
Do you remember  
The little doll-faced children  
With their lanterns full of moon-fire,  
That came from all the empire  
Honoring the throne?—  
The loveliest fête and carnival  
Our world had ever known?  
The sages sat about us  
With their heads bowed in their beards,  
With proper meditation on the sight.  
Confucius was not born;  
We lived in those great days  
Confucius later said were lived aright . . .  
And this gray bird, on that day of Spring,  
With a bright-bronze breast, and a bronze-brown wing,  
Captured the world with his carolling.  
Late at night his tune was spent.  
Peasants,  
Sages,  
Children,  
Homeward went,  
And then the bronze bird sang for you and me.  
We walked alone, our hearts were high and free.

I had a silvery name, I had a silvery name,  
I had a silvery name—do you remember  
The name you cried beside the tumbling sea?"

Chang turned not to the lady slim—  
He bent to his work, ironing away;  
But she was arch and knowing and glowing.  
And the bird on his shoulder spoke for him.

"Darling . . . darling . . . darling . . . darling . . ."  
Said the Chinese nightingale.

The great gray joss on a rustic shelf,  
Rakish and shrewd, with his collar awry,  
Sang impolitely, as though by himself,  
Drowning with his bellowing the nightingale's cry:  
"Back through a hundred, hundred years  
Hear the waves as they climb the piers,  
Hear the howl of the silver seas,  
Hear the thunder!  
Hear the gongs of holy China  
How the waves and tunes combine  
In a rhythmic clashing wonder,  
Incantation old and fine:  
'Dragons, dragons, Chinese dragons;  
Red fire-crackers, and green fire-crackers,  
And dragons, dragons, Chinese dragons.'"  
Then the lady, rosy-red,  
Turned to her lover Chang and said:  
"Dare you forget that turquoise dawn  
When we stood on our mist-hung velvet lawn,  
And worked a spell this great joss taught  
Till a God of the Dragons was charmed and caught?  
From the flag high over our palace-home  
He flew to our feet in rainbow-foam—  
A king of beauty and tempest and thunder  
Panting to tear our sorrows asunder,  
We mounted the back of that royal slave  
With thoughts of desire that were noble and grave.

We swam down the shore to the dragon-mountains,  
We whirled to the peaks and the fiery fountains.  
To our secret ivory house we were borne.  
We looked down the wonderful wing-filled regions  
Where the dragons darted in glimmering legions.  
Right by my breast the nightingale sang;  
The old rhymes rang in the sunlit mist  
That we this hour regain—  
Song-fire for the brain.  
When my hands and my hair and my feet you kissed,  
When you cried for your heart's new pain,  
What was my name in the dragon-mist,  
In the rings of the rainbowed rain?"

"Sorrow and love, glory and love,"  
Said the Chinese nightingale.  
"Sorrow and love, glory and love,"  
Said the Chinese nightingale.

And now the joss broke in with his song:  
"Dying ember, bird of Chang,  
Soul of Chang, do you remember?—  
Ere you returned to the shining harbor  
There were pirates by ten thousand  
Descended on the town  
In vessels mountain-high and red and brown  
Moon-ships that climbed the storms and cut the skies.  
On their prows were painted terrible bright eyes.  
But I was then a wizard and a scholar and a priest;  
I stood upon the sand;  
With lifted hand I looked upon them  
And sunk their vessels with my wizard eyes,  
And the stately lacquer-gate made safe again.  
Deep, deep below the bay, the sea-weed and the spray,  
Embalmed in amber every pirate lies,  
Embalmed in amber every pirate lies."

Then this did the noble lady say:  
"Bird, do you dream of our home-coming day  
When you flew like a courier on before  
From the dragon-peak to our palace-door,

And we drove the steed in your singing path—  
The ramping dragon of laughter and wrath;  
And found our city all aglow,  
And knighted this joss that decked it so?  
There were golden fishes in the purple river  
And silver fishes and rainbow fishes.  
There were golden junks in the laughing river,  
And silver junks and rainbow junks:  
There were golden lilies by the bay and river,  
And silver-lilies and tiger-lilies,  
And tinkling wind-bells in the gardens of the town  
By the black lacquer-gate  
Where walked in state  
The kind king Chang  
And his sweet-heart mate . . .  
With his flag-born dragon  
And his crown of pearl . . . and . . . jade;  
And his nightingale reigning in the mulberry shade,  
And sailors and soldiers on the sea-sands brown,  
And priests who bowed them down to your song—  
By the city called Han, the peacock town,  
By the city called Han, the nightingale town,  
The nightingale town.”  
Then sang the bird, so strangely gay,  
Fluttering, fluttering, ghostly and gray,  
A vague, unravelling, answering tune,  
Like a long unwinding silk cocoon;  
Sang as though for the soul of him  
Who ironed away in that bower dim:

“I have forgotten  
Your dragons great,  
Merry and mad and friendly and bold.  
Dim is your proud lost palace-gate.  
I vaguely know  
There were heroes of old,  
Troubles more than the heart could hold,  
There were wolves in the woods  
Yet lambs in the fold,

Nests in the top of the almond tree . . .  
The evergreen tree . . . and the mulberry tree . . .  
Life and hurry and joy forgotten  
Years on years I but half-remember . . .  
Man is a torch, then ashes soon,  
May and June, then dead December,  
Dead December, then again June.  
Who shall end my dream's confusion?  
Life is a loom, weaving illusion . . .  
I remember, I remember  
There were ghostly veils and laces . . .  
In the shadowy, bowery places . . .  
With lovers' ardent faces  
Bending to one another,  
Speaking each his part.  
They infinitely echo  
In the red cave of my heart.  
'Sweetheart, sweetheart, sweetheart!'  
They said to one another.  
They spoke, I think, of perils past.  
They spoke, I think, of peace at last.  
One thing I remember:  
Spring came on forever,  
Spring came on forever,"  
Said the Chinese nightingale.

## WAYNE GARD

### *Beyond Bhamo*

Beyond Bhamo where Chinese caravans  
With burro bells and rich exotic loads  
Crawl winding over Himalayan roads  
Past villages of animistic clans  
And primal jungles where the tiger reigns.  
There tropics end; bamboo begins to share  
The hills with violet and maidenhair  
And myna welcomes magpie in the plains.

Though I may live to squander idle years,  
Yet will I hear the parrot's bedlam call,  
And still the distant cry of apes will fall  
Compellingly upon my restless ears  
Till I must pack a bag of dreams and go  
To follow twinkling trails beyond Bhamo.

*New Orient*, Oct.-Dec., 1924.

ANTOINETTE ROTAN PETERSON

*The Old Tea Master of Kyoto \**

Well hid from the city street  
At the end of the temple garden  
A garden green and old, and he the warden,  
Beside his bamboo wicket  
Set in a laurel thicket  
The old man stood, bowing courteously  
His guests to greet;  
Then up a narrow foot-path led the way  
Over the small flat stones and soon  
From the low hill we saw where lay  
A lake of lilies in the afternoon.

Thin films of summer rain were falling,  
Not a bird was calling;  
In all the air washed clean  
No fleck was to be seen;  
But still the path was newly swept  
And the damp sand kept  
Fresh marks of the broom  
Beside the small tea room.  
We doffed our shoes and silently  
Went in where was no door;  
The old man knelt without a servile trace  
And bent his grey head to the floor,  
Then disappeared, and for a space  
The stillness grew and filled the place;  
No word we spake,  
But looked out on the lake;  
Old silver painted with green lily pads;

\* From *Asia*, January, 1920.

Like still white flames the lotus flowers stood  
Against a soot-black cryptomeria wood;  
Then through each nerve a sudden rapture ran,  
It was the nightingale of old Japan!

We sat on the soft matting;  
Another bow;  
Bearing a vase for water now,  
A rich brown triumph of the glazier,  
The master came  
And set it near the brazier  
With deft, slow care; the same  
Measuring steps, a sort of delicate shuffle,  
When next he brought a slender tea-jug  
Of much prized white with streaks of sea-slug  
And sparks of red as in a pheasant's ruffle,  
And then a bowl  
Whose colours "warm as jade" were young  
When the dynasty was Sung.  
He seemed so very simple, even humble,  
As he made the minute motions  
Of those complicated notions;  
Not to falter once or fumble  
Showed his thoughts were not of self at all.  
More grace than we possessed was needed  
As the ceremony quaint proceeded,  
But—at length—we sipped the bowl  
Where east and west with disparate soul  
Do meet, for all the world drinks tea.

"The inner meaning of it, please," I said,  
And while we listened watched the fine old head,  
Lean, grizzled, bony and bizarre,  
Face like an ivory carving  
With just enough of saintly starving,  
And lined with thought as sages are;—  
He wore a gown of sober grey,  
Immaculate white stockings  
And in his girdle a purple napkin lay;  
No nervous lockings

Of those sinewy, tempered hands,  
Controlled from head to foot he stands  
Or sits: sparse bearded, yellow throated,  
His eyes were what I chiefly noted:  
They pierced, then smiled,  
And when he spoke his voice was mild.

“First then,” he said, “it teaches you  
An hundred things to do,  
And yet to make  
Not one mistake.  
If to a point held ready  
The mind grows calm and steady;  
Also it teaches courtesy,  
The manners of a host,  
And guests in their degree  
Must prove as skilled as he  
Or else much gentleness were lost;  
Therefore the duty of each one  
Prescribed exactly, must be done.  
‘Know thyself,’ the sages said,  
Possess thyself is better bred.  
Who knows the principles of tea,  
If with the daimios’ sons he sits  
Each plays his part as each befits,  
No shadow of embarrassment  
Shall mar his grave content,  
For he the plain man wears  
The self-same dignity as theirs.

“And how shall knowledge grow,  
Nature we love and art in nature;  
Such thoughts add cubits to man’s stature.  
My little house would lose its meaning  
If it were not for nature’s screening;  
This garden path, the lotus lake below,  
Are one with my kakemono.  
The July day is hot and wet,  
Therefore before you I have set  
A pictured pine-tree cool with snow;  
The asters in the vase seem whiter so.

“Our race has given to the world  
A matchless art in all things small.  
This lacquered box with dragonflies impearled  
And gold chrysanthemums against a wall  
Of silvery rocks where runs a quail to cover  
Upon a ground of purest cinnabar,  
Shall we not rightly reverence it  
And make our conversation fit  
The artist’s great achievement over  
A strange intractable material,  
The ceremonial tea occasion gives  
For studious contemplation of the arts  
And never bidden guest departs  
But feels anew that Beauty lives  
With power to lift man’s hearts.

“Poets—we loved them from of old  
And even to-day, despite the vulgar marts  
Where honour’s bought and sold  
And blood of samurai for filthy gold,  
And flaunting impudence and scorn  
Of old ancestral ways are born,  
Our gentlefolk still gravely drink their tea  
And think no shame to make sweet poesy.  
I know ’tis said that ‘manners makyth man’  
As well in Europe as Japan.  
Of one that lacketh taste, we say  
‘No tea in him.’  
‘Unteafulness’ leads foolish youth astray,  
Yields to the naughty whim,  
The ‘teaful’ man sweet reason will obey.

“It is another of our ways  
That on the service certain praise  
Must be bestowed;  
To the kindly host  
For all the care it cost  
No less were surely owed.  
But nice discrimination seek  
And well to think before you speak;

False praises jangle on the ear;  
While judgment ever plays a part,  
Best compliments come from the heart,  
We learn from tea to be sincere.  
Also, since aught of waste  
Is merely want of taste  
Tea teaches us economy;  
It teaches cleanliness severe  
Whence comes a love of purity  
That cleanses us from petty strife.”  
And then his fan he gently furled,  
“Tea is our art of life,”  
He said, “the art of being in the world.”

H. M. BRATTER

*Night in Japan*

Clearly the sound of song reaches me over the water.  
Night falls in Osaka.

The new-born moon, timid and pale, floats in the white that lingers  
in the West.

The opposite houses are shadows against the sky;  
Their double rows of lights grow bolder with the dusk, and laugh.  
The lanterns of the river-boats nod and sway  
In the dream-making perfume of Spring.  
Swift are the waters under the hollow-sounding bridge as I turn  
toward home.

HELEN SCHLESINGER

*To Ling Tsui, Embroidering*

(Original)

Under the coral tips of your fingers,  
As they draw the silk in and out,  
Your hands build bridges.  
I see their slim ivory curves,  
Rhythmical arches of coral and ivory.  
Your hands are lovelier than some women's lips,  
Ling Tsui.  
Over these delicate bridges,  
My thoughts cross to you.  
So might a Ming Princess  
Have built a pagoda  
For love to dwell in.

THOMAS BURKE

*At the Feast of Lanterns*

From "The Song-book of Quong Lee of Limehouse"

Lithely on their strings swing the many-coloured lanterns,  
For this is the Feast of Lanterns,  
And Pennyfields and West India Dock Road  
Are to-night a part of my own country,  
Aglow with the hues of the Peacock's Tail,  
Very amiable to the eye.

In a recess of my heart  
Is a poor street hung with lanterns.  
These lanterns are my thoughts,  
And they are lighted at the last hours of the evenings,  
When through this street  
Walks the willowy maiden from the tea-shop across the road.

*The Lamplighter*

The dark days now begin, when in afternoon  
The Great Night Lantern makes a razor-edge of black and  
white.  
And one comes called the Lamplighter,  
And the straight stiff lamps of these stiff London streets,  
At his quick touch burst into light.

At this shy hour,  
I see from my unshaded window,  
Bright girls, hair flowing, go by with shuttered faces,  
Holding close captive their warm insurgent bosoms.  
And then, at the corner,  
Some slender lad with bold and upright carriage,  
Greets them, and the shuttered lanterns of their faces  
Burst with light at the touch of the lamplighter.

O kind ingenious lamplighter,  
Will you please step this way?

### *A Song of Little Girls*

I want to make a song of the little girls  
That live about this quarter.  
I could make a song of boys quite easily with words,  
But words are too blunt for such delicate things as girls.  
I would like to make my song of them with bees and butterflies.  
One looks at the boy, and says Boy;  
And lo, one has described him.  
But little girls are morning light and melody;  
Their happy hair flutters and flies, or curtains their laughing  
faces,  
Faces glad as the sun at dawn.  
Their clear, cool skin is like wine to the eyes.  
The lines of their fluent limbs run like a song,  
And every step is a note of grace which the frock repeats.

Don't you think it a pity, and greatly to be deplored  
That these should lose this beauty,  
And pass from it to the guile and trickery of woman?

### *Of Buying and Selling*

Throughout the day I sit behind the counter of my shop,  
And the odours of my country are all about me:  
Areca nut and betel leaf and manioc,  
Lon-yan and suey sen,  
Chandoo and dried seaweed,  
Tchah and tong-kiang.  
And these carry my mind to half-forgotten days,  
When taels were plentiful and care was hard to hold.

All day I sell for trifling sums the wares of my own land,  
And buy for many cash such things as people wish to sell,  
That I may sell them again to others, with some profit to myself.

One night a white-skinned damsel came to me,  
And offered, with fair words, something she wished to sell.  
Now if I desire a jacket I can buy it with coin,  
Or barter for it something of my stock.  
If I desire rice-spirit, that, too, I can buy;  
And elegant entertainment and delights are all to be had for cash.

But there is one good thing above all things precious,  
That no man may buy.  
And though I buy readily most things that I desire,  
The thing that the white maid offered at my own price,  
I would not buy.

C H R I S T O P H E R M O R L E Y

*Thoughts in the Kitchen*

From "Translations from the Chinese"

The night I gave a supper to Chancellor Mu Kow  
My serving maid departed,  
And after the ceremony  
I had to do the cleaning-up myself.

And I was thinking:  
Even an "informal" dinner  
Means a terrible lot of washing up.  
And though it takes a pretty big flame  
To boil a cauldron of water,  
A very small flame  
Will keep it boiling.

There must be some philosophical application for these thoughts  
If I could only discern it.

*He Comforts Himself*

When I visited America  
(It is the tedious Old Mandarin speaking)  
I was eager to visit the birthplaces  
Of Emily Dickinson and Louise Imogen Guiney,  
And I found that this people  
Had so neglected two of their greatest poets  
That they hardly even knew their names.  
But I was not peevish nor distraught:  
I said to myself  
Humanity is everywhere alike—  
I myself am but little known in China.

### *The Realist*

The sun shone on the meadow  
And painted silver patines on the level river;  
A purple bird spread scarlet wings  
Under the trumpet vine arbor  
And the scent of the pink melons was in the balmy air.  
But, down there by the waterside,  
These colors gave me no comfort.  
I was wondering  
Whether an early morning bath  
Would ease my mahogany colored spaniel  
Of his plague of fleas.

### *The Hubbub of the Universe*

Man makes a great fuss  
About this planet  
Which is only a ball-bearing  
In the hub of the universe.  
It reminds me  
Of the staff of a humorous weekly  
Sitting in grave conference  
On a two-line joke.



IV  
NOTES



## N O T E S

### I.

In these poems Li Po records what he saw of the "southern" girls in Kiangsu and Chehkiang. These provinces were under the king of Yueh in the 5th and 6th centuries B.C.

Chang-kan is near the city of Nanking, and was at Li Po's time inhabited by the lower class of people.

The crowhead covers are a kind of shoes worn by the upper-class women of the north. So named on account of their shape and very small size—small feet seem to have been already at a premium. "It is interesting," remarks a native critic demurely, "to note Li Po's admiration for a barefoot woman."

SHIGEYOSHI OBATA.

### 2. *Li Po (706-765)*

The greatest of all the Chinese lyrists, Li Po was a child of Nature and subject like her to infinite moods. He may perhaps be called a pessimist, but not in the sense that we call Schopenhauer and his school pessimists. His was a pessimism of contrasts; the brighter the day, the darker the shadow. His fault, if so exquisite a lyricist may be said to possess one, was that he never looked beyond a single cycle. With him, the spring arrives, he sees summer lengthen into autumn, and autumn fall before winter; but there, for him, the cycle ends. There is no return of spring. Like so many of his great contemporaries, Tu Fu, Meng Hao Jan, and others, he bends low to catch a whisper of the past, some voice murmuring as in a dream from moonlit ruins foreboding the common lot of all.

It has been said of him that he had no cure for sorrow but the forgetfulness that lurks in the wine-cup. This is only true in part. When the littleness of man came into hopeless conflict with the vastness of destiny, there was but one way of escape for the poets and philosophers of China. It is called "the Return to Harmony"; it consists in identifying oneself with Nature. Chuang Tzu, the philosopher, knew this; Li Po, the poet, felt it.

L. CRANMER-BYNG.

### 3.

These translations by Mo Zung Chung from classical Chinese poets are from an expensively illustrated and generally got-up work called "In a Chinese Garden" published at the expense of an American lady in Shanghai a few years ago. There is a copy in the New York Public Library.

EDITOR.

#### 4. The Forms of Chinese Poetry

There is no word for poetry in Chinese. The word *shih*, which is commonly translated "poetry," has a much narrower meaning. The Chinese distinguish two kinds of poetry: (1) verse which is meant to be sung and is associated with a definite tune; (2) verse which is meant to be recited. In recitation the reader follows his own fancy, aiming only at bringing out the musical quality of the verse. In declaiming verse, either for his own pleasure or for that of others, a Chinese will always intone rather than merely speak it.

The Odes of Confucius are songs. They were meant to be sung to definite tunes, which, unfortunately, have not survived. In those early days *shih* (the name by which the Confucian Odes were known) meant a song to be accompanied by flute or strings; an unaccompanied song was called *ko*. Pure poetry, existing independently from music, began with the *fu*, and was confined to this form till about A.D. 150. Meanwhile, in 150 B.C. the Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty founded the Yo Fu or Music School. It was the duty of this department to collect the tunes and words of songs current in different parts of China. The words of such songs were called *Yo Fu Shih*. Word-rhythm and tune-rhythm were at this period still almost identical. The main types of metre were as follows:

(1) Four syllables to the line.

Derived from slow four time without rests. Such lines when recited (not sung) tend to approximate to five-four time, with a rest in the fifth place of each bar.

(2) Five syllables to the line.

Probably derived from a bar of six time, with a rest in the last place of each bar. This seems to have been the metre of popular ballads before the T'ang dynasty.

(3) Seven syllables to the line.

Derived from common time (eight quavers) with a rest in the last place. This was the typical metre of T'ang dynasty popular ballads.

It seems to have been in the eighth century that it first occurred to poets that new verse-metres might be made out of the rhythms of the songs which were current. Two experiments in this direction are doubtfully attributed to Li Po; one or two were made by Po Chü-i and other poets in the ninth century. Such poems were called *T'ien-tz'u* or "filled-out verses." That is to say, instead of taking verses in the standard Chinese metres and fitting them to song-tunes by insertion of meaningless syllables, repetition, etc., verses were now written in which each syllable of poetry corresponded to a note in the tune. Such verses were naturally constructed in repeated strophes corresponding to the repetitions of the tune. It is possible that this kind of poetry originated in the monasteries, for among the manuscripts brought back by Sir Aurel Stein from the Cave of the Thousand Buddhas there are several religious ballads written in the *t'ien-tz'u* form. One is a *Life of Buddha*; its date would seem to be about A.D. 800. The following passage, which I will quote in the original, describes Shäkyamuni's ordeal in the mountains:

*Ku kao shan,  
Wan jēn hsüeh ling pu ts'ēng hsiao,  
Han to shu ts'ao pu ch'ēng t'iao,  
T'ai-tz'u lo hsiao-yao. . .  
Ch'ien nien ch'iu hsüeh tsai ch'i-ku,  
Yu ping to;*

*Ts'ao mu ling tsēng kua ch'i-lo;  
Shih pi ch'ien t'so-o.  
Hsüeh ling nan mien hsün  
T'ai-tzü tso pan-t'o.*

[Lonely high mountain,  
Ten thousand cubits snow crest; not once melt.  
Cold much, trees and shrubs not grow branches.  
Prince for pleasure wanders there.  
Hundred seasons old snow lies on valley-ravine,  
Moreover ice much.  
Grasses and trees piled in tiers hang gauze festoons;  
Stone-walls precipitous and irregular.  
Snow crest south face abyss  
Prince sits huddled.]

The song continues:

*The Six Robbers [the six senses] he changes into the Six Pāramitās [paths to virtue], by spiritual practice and much austerity. He sees winged creatures sweep by him, demons [yakshas] in innumerable hosts. At last a great mist rises and spreads across the shoulders of the hill. Where is Buddha, where those veined cliffs?*

*T'ai-tzü ch'u so-p'o.*

The Prince has left this mortal world.

It was in the tenth century that the *t'ien-tzü* became an accredited literary form. The man who raised it to this position was Li Hou-chu, last Emperor of the Southern T'ang dynasty, deposed by the Sungs three years before his early death. Many of his *tzü* were written after his deposition, when he was wandering forlornly through his former empire, "High Heaven fallen among mortal men." This is one of his poems:

*Immeasurable pain!  
My dreaming soul last night was king again.  
As in past days  
I wandered through the Palace of Delight,  
And in my dream  
Down grassy garden-ways  
Glided my chariot, smoother than a summer stream;  
There was moonlight,  
The trees were blossoming,  
And a faint wind softened the air of night,  
For it was spring.*

The *t'ien-tzü* best known to European readers are those of the Sung poetess Li I-an, A.D. 1082-1140, translated by Judith Gautier in the second edition of her *Livre de Jade*. Many of the pieces in that book are either entirely original compositions, or are only remotely connected with Chinese poems. But these particular translations reproduce fairly accurately the content and atmosphere of Li I-an's *tzü*.

In ancient China the highest praise that could be given to music was to call it "lugubrious," to say that it "tore the heart-strings," that it "moved the

listener to rheum and tears." It is not surprising that the *tz'u*, so intimately connected with music, should have been concerned chiefly with the pathetic. Guttering candles, sinking ashes, wilting flowers, vanished youth, solitude, dereliction—such are its constant themes. It is in fact the most abstract poetry that exists; for the subject-matter is so unvarying that it ceases to occupy the mind at all. The *tz'u* is a pure music of words, woven on a background of conventional sentimentality. The language used is very simple and has in it much of the colloquial. The rhymes, unlike those of other Sung poetry, were determined by current pronunciation, not by archaeological considerations. The tone-pattern, though elaborate, was less exacting than that of "new poems" in the regular metres.

Out of the *t'ien-tz'u* developed the dramatic lyrics called *ch'u*, upon which were founded the stage-plays of the fourteenth century. This is not the place to embark upon a discussion of the Chinese theatre, and I must reserve the *ch'u* for another occasion. But it is perhaps worth while to point out that the drama of the fourteenth century is known to us only in an anthology (*the Hundred Plays of the Mongol Dynasty*), compiled in 1616. If this anthology is as unrepresentative as are the T'ang poetry collections compiled at the same period, there may well have existed a Chinese Æschylus of whom we know nothing.

ARTHUR WALEY, *The Temple and Other Poems.*

### 5. *The Shi King*

The *Shi King*, or Book of Poetry, was compiled by Confucius about 500 B.C. from earlier collections which had been long existent, two of which, we know from an ode written about 780 B.C., were called *Ya* and *Nan* respectively. The oldest of these odes belong to the Shang dynasty, 1765-1122 B.C.; the latest to the time of King Ting, 605-585 B.C. The odes may be roughly divided into two classes: (1) The Songs of the People; (2) The Official Odes. Professor Giles, in his *History of Chinese Literature* (Heinemann), divides the latter into three classes: (a) Odes sung at ordinary entertainments given by the suzerain; (b) Odes sung on grand occasions when the feudal nobles were gathered together; (c) Panegyrics and sacrificial odes.

The great importance that Confucius placed upon the Book of Poetry may be gathered from the following anecdote: One day his son Le was passing hurriedly through the Court, when he met his father standing alone lost in thought. Confucius, on seeing his son, addressed him thus:

"Have you read the Odes?"

He replied, "Not yet."

"Then," said Confucius, "if you do not learn the Odes, you will not be fit to converse with.\*"

To understand this, we must know something of the character and teachings of Confucius. William Morris was to some extent the Confucius of his age. Both men dreamt of a golden past—a past brilliant with heroic deeds, mellowed with peace, and serene beneath the first clear dawn of ancient wisdom. Both drew inspiration from the unstained springs of poetry. Morris went back to the sagas of the North and the tales and tragedies of the early Greeks; Confucius to the odes and ballads of his own country. For Morris, "the idle singer of an empty day," the world had grown old and careworn and unheroic. Confucius, too, was born out of his due time. The world—his world of petty princelings and court intrigues and oppression—was not ripe for the great gospel of humanity he had come to preach. Each failed lamentably in

\* *Confucianism and Taoism*, by Sir Robert Douglas (S.P.C.K.).

politics, and succeeded elsewhere: Confucius as the transmitter of the wisdom of the ages, the revealer of human goodness through conduct and knowledge; William Morris as the inspired prophet of beauty, the teacher of good taste to the hideous Victorian age in which he was born. When the dogmas and economics of his socialism are forgotten, this influence will remain.

Lastly, and perhaps greatest parallel of all, both passionately loved the people. Confucius, when asked how the superior man attained his position, said: "He cultivates himself so as to bring rest unto the people." Again he said: "To govern a country of a thousand chariots, there must be reverent attention to business, and faithfulness, economy in expenditure, and *love for the people*." Both recognised, as all great men must, that there is more to be learnt from the natural man, the man who lives next to Nature, and through his toil knows something of her ways and moods, than the artificial mime of ancient court or modern drawing-room. It was through the Odes that Confucius taught his own generation to understand the manners and customs and the simple feelings of the men of old. Here are no great poems written by highly cultivated men, but songs that came naturally from the hearts of all, concerning their little troubles, their hopes and fears, the business in which they were engaged.

L. CRANMER-BYNG.

## 6. *The T'ang Dynasty (600-900)*

The T'ang dynasty is usually associated in Chinese minds with much romance of love and war, with wealth, culture, and refinement, with frivolity, extravagance, and dissipation, but most of all with poetry. China's best efforts in this direction were chiefly produced within the limits of its three hundred years' duration, and they have been carefully preserved as finished models for future poets of all generations.

"Poetry," says a modern Chinese critic, "came into being with the Odes, developed with the *Li Sao*, burst forth and reached perfection under the T'angs. Some good work was indeed done under the Han and Wei dynasties; the writers of those days seemed to have material in abundance, but language inadequate to its expression."

The *Complete Collection of the Poetry of the T'ang Dynasty*, published in 1707, contains 48,900 poems of all kinds, arranged in 900 books, and filling thirty good-sized volumes. Some Chinese writers divide the dynasty into three poetical periods, called Early, Glorious, and Late; and they profess to detect in the works assigned to each the corresponding characteristics of growth, fulness, and decay. Others insert a Middle period between the last two, making four periods in all. For general purposes, however, it is only necessary to state, that since the age of the Hans the meanings of words had gradually come to be more definitely fixed, and the structural arrangement more uniform and more polished. Imagination began to come more freely into play, and the language to flow more easily and more musically, as though responsive to the demands of art. A Chinese poem is at best a hard nut to crack, expressed as it usually is in lines of five or seven monosyllabic root-ideas, without inflection, agglutination, or grammatical indication of any kind, the connection between which has to be inferred by the reader from the logic, from the context, and least perhaps of all from the syntactical arrangement of the words. Then, again, the poet is hampered not only by rhyme but also by tone. For purposes of poetry the characters in the Chinese language are all ranged under two tones, as flats and sharps, and these occupy fixed positions just as dactyls, spondees, trochees, and anapæsts in the construction of

Latin verse. As a consequence, the natural order of words is often entirely sacrificed to the exigencies of tone, thus making it more difficult than ever for the reader to grasp the sense. In a stanza of the ordinary five-character length the following tonal arrangement would appear:—

<i>Sharp</i>	<i>sharp</i>	<i>flat</i>	<i>flat</i>	<i>sharp</i>
<i>Flat</i>	<i>flat,</i>	<i>sharp</i>	<i>sharp</i>	<i>flat</i>
<i>Flat</i>	<i>flat</i>	<i>flat</i>	<i>sharp</i>	<i>sharp</i>
<i>Sharp</i>	<i>sharp</i>	<i>sharp</i>	<i>flat</i>	<i>flat</i>

The effect produced by these tones is very marked and pleasing to the ear, and often makes up for the faultiness of the rhymes, which are simply the rhymes of the Odes as heard 2500 years ago, many of them of course being no longer rhymes at all. Thus, there is as much artificiality about a stanza of Chinese verse as there is about an Alcaic stanza in Latin. But in the hands of the most gifted this artificiality is altogether concealed by art, and the very trammels of tone and rhyme become transfigured, and seem to be necessary aids and adjuncts to success. Many works have been published to guide the student in his admittedly difficult task. The first rule in one of these seems so comprehensive as to make further perusal quite unnecessary. It runs thus:—"Discard commonplace form; discard commonplace ideas; discard commonplace phrasing; discard commonplace words; discard commonplace rhymes."

A long poem does not appeal to the Chinese mind. There is no such thing as an epic in the language, though, of course, there are many pieces extending to several hundred lines. Brevity is indeed the soul of a Chinese poem, which is valued not so much for what it says as for what it suggests. As in painting, so in poetry suggestion is the end and aim of the artist, who in each case may be styled an impressionist. The ideal length is twelve lines, and this is the limit set to candidates at the great public examinations at the present day, the Chinese holding that if a poet cannot say within such compass what he has to say it may very well be left unsaid. The eight-line poem is also a favourite, and so, but for its extreme difficulty, is the four-line epigram, or "stop-short," so called because of its abruptness, though, as the critics explain, "it is only the words which stop, the sense goes on," some train of thought having been suggested to the reader. The latter form of verse was in use so far back as the Han dynasty, but only reached perfection under the T'angs.

H. A. GILES, *A History of Chinese Literature* (1924).

## 7. *Po Chü-i*

Po Chü-i (772-846) is almost nearer to the Western idea of a poet than any other Chinese writer. He was fortunate enough to be born when the great love-tragedy of Ming Huang and T'ai Chen was still fresh in the minds of men. He had the right perspective, being not too near and yet able to see clearly. He had, moreover, the feeling for romance which is so ill-defined in other poets of his country, though strongly evident in Chinese legend and story. He is an example of that higher patriotism rarely met with in Chinese official life which recognises a duty to the Emperor as Father of the national family—a duty too often forgotten in the obligation to the clan and the desire to use power for personal advantage. Passionately devoted to literature, he might, like Li Po and Tu Fu, have set down the seals of office and lived for art alone by the mountain-side of his beloved Hsiang-shan. But no one knew better than Po Chü-i that from him that hath much, much shall

be expected. The poet ennobled political life, the broader outlook of affairs enriched his poetry and humanised it.

And when some short holiday brought him across the frontier, and the sunlight, breaking out after a noon of rain over the dappled valleys of China, called him home, who shall blame him for lingering awhile amid his forest dreams with his fishing and the chase.

Yet solitude and the picturesque cannot hold him for long, nor even the ardours of the chase. Po Chü-i is above all the poet of human love and sorrow, and beyond all the consoler. Those who profess to find pessimism in the Chinese character must leave him alone. His career was as varied as his talents. In collaboration with the historian Sung C'hi he prepared a history of the recent T'ang dynasty. He also held the important post of Grand Examiner, and was at one time appointed a Governor in the provinces. It is difficult to praise the "Autumn" too highly. With its daring imagery, grave magnificence of language and solemn thought, it is nothing less than Elizabethan, and only the masters of that age could have done it justice in the rendering.

L. CRANMER-BYNG, *A Lute of Jade.*

### 8. *Ssü-K'ung T'u*

Ssü-K'ung T'u (834-908). Little is known of his life, except that he was Secretary to the Board of Rites and retired from this position to lead the contemplative life. His introduction to the European world is entirely due to Professor Giles. No mention is made of him in the French collection of the T'ang poets by the Marquis de Saint-Denys. Yet the importance of his work cannot well be over-estimated. He is perhaps the most Chinese of the poets dealt with, and certainly one of the most philosophical. By his subtly simple method of treatment, lofty themes are clothed in the bright raiment of poetry. If through the red pine woods, or amid the torrent of peach-blossom rushing down the valley, some mortal beauty strays, she is but a symbol, a lure that leads us by way of the particular into the universal. Whatever senses we possess may be used as means of escape from the prison of personality into the boundless freedom of the spiritual world. And once the soul is set free, there is no need for painful aimless wanderings, no need for Mahomet to go to the Mountain, for resting in the centre of all things the universe will be our home and our share in the secrets of the World-BUILDER will be made known.

Freighted with eternal principles  
Athwart the night's void,  
Where cloud masses darken,  
And the wind blows ceaseless around,  
  
Beyond the range of conceptions  
Let us gain the Centre,  
And there hold fast without violence.  
Fed from an inexhaustible supply.\*

L. CRANMER-BYNG, *A Lute of Jade.*

### 9.

To the Chinese such commonplace things as marriage, friendship, and home have an infinitely deeper meaning than can be attached to them by civilisation which practically lives abroad, in the hotels and restaurants and open houses of others, where there is no sanctity of the life within, no shrine

\* *Chinese Literature*, p. 179.

set apart for the hidden family re-union, and the cult of the ancestral spirit. To the Western world, life, save for the conventional hour or so set aside on the seventh day, is a thing profane. In the far East the head of every family is a high-priest in the calling of daily life. It is for this reason that a quietism is to be found in Chinese poetry ill appealing to the unrest of our day, and as dissimilar to our ideals of existence as the life of the planets is to that of the dark bodies whirling aimlessly through space.

L. CRANMER-BYNG, Introduction to *A Lute o; Jade*.

#### I.O.

The golden age of Chinese poetry arrived with the T'ang Dynasty (618-906). Call the roll of these three hundred eventful years, and all the great masters of song will answer you. This is an age of professional poets, whom emperors and statesmen delight to honour.

A study of the interminable biographies of Chinese poets and men of letters would reveal but a few professional poets, men whose lives were wholly devoted to their art; and of these few the T'ang dynasty can claim nearly all. Yet strange as it may seem, this matters but little when the quality of Chinese poetry is considered. The great men of the age were at once servants of duty and the lords of life. To them official routine and the responsibilities of the state were burdens to be borne along the highway, with periods of rest and intimate re-union with Nature to cheer the travellers. When the heavy load was laid aside, song rose naturally from the lips. Subtly connecting the arts, they were at once painters and poets, musicians and singers. And because they were philosophers and seekers after the beauty that underlies the form of things, they made the picture express its own significance, and every song find echo in the souls of those that heard. You will find no tedium of repetition in all their poetry, no thin vein of thought beaten out over endless pages.

The fact, however, remains that concentration and suggestion are the two essentials of Chinese poetry. There is neither Iliad nor Odyssey to be found in the libraries of the Chinese; indeed, a favourite feature of their verse is the "stop short," a poem containing only four lines, concerning which another critic has explained that only the words stop, while the sense goes on. But what a world of meaning is to be found between four short lines! Often a door is opened, a curtain drawn aside, in the halls of romance, where the reader may roam at will. With this nation of artists in emotion, the taste of the tea is a thing of lesser importance; it is the aroma which remains and delights. The poems of the T'angs are full of this subtle aroma, this suggestive compelling fragrance which lingers when the songs have passed away. It is as though the Æolian harps had caught some strayed wind from an unknown world, and brought strange messages from peopled stars.

A deep simplicity touching many hidden springs, a profound regard for the noble uses of leisure, things which modern critics of life have taught us to despise—these are the technique and the composition and colour of all their work.

L. CRANMER-BYNG.

#### II.

The most famous name in Chinese literature. Born in the province of Ssüch'uan, Li Po obtained his doctor's degree at the age of twenty, and was already known as a brilliant, inspired poet before Ming Huang became his patron in the capital. A suite of rooms overlooking the beautiful gardens of T'eng-hsiang T'ing, where the Emperor retired after the routine of the day,

was assigned to him. Here the poet improvised, whilst Ming Huang himself wrote down the verses that he afterwards set to music, and accompanied while the poet sang. But Li Po, with all his enthusiasm for his patron and the delights of the garden-life, was little of a courtier. When Ming Huang bade the masterful eunuch Kao Li-shih unlace the poet's boots, he gave him a relentless enemy whose malice pursued him, until at length he was glad to beg leave to retire from the court, where he was never at ease and to which he never returned. Troubadour-like, he wandered through the provinces, the guest of mandarin and local governor, the star of the drinking-taverns, the delight and embarrassment of all his hosts. At length a friend of former days, to whom he had attached himself, unhappily involved him in the famous rebellion of An Lu-shan. The poet was seized and thrown into prison. Yet prison doors were ill warders of his fame, and letters of recall followed closely upon pardon; but death overtook the exile before he could reach the capital, and at the age of sixty his wanderings came to an end.

Li Po was a poet with a sword by his side. He would have ruffled bravely with our Elizabethans, and for a Chinese is strangely warlike in sentiment. How he loves the bravo of Chao with his sabre from the Chinese Sheffield of Wu, "with the surface smooth as ice and dazzling as snow, with his saddle broidered with silver upon his white steed; who when he passes, swift as the wind, may be said to resemble a shooting star!" He compares the frontiersman, who has never so much as opened a book in all his life, yet knows how to follow in the chase, and is skilful, strong, and hardy, with the men of his own profession. "From these intrepid wanderers how different our literary men who grow grey over their books behind a curtained window."

It is harder to write of Li Po than of any other Chinese poet. Po Chu-i has his own distinctive feeling for romance, Tu Fu his minute literary craftsmanship, Ssü-K'ung T'u the delicate aroma of suggestive mysticism; but Li Po is many-sided, and has perhaps more of the world-spirit than all of them. We can imagine this bold, careless, impulsive artist, with his moments of great exaltation and alternate depression, a kind of Chinese Paul Verlaine, with his sensitive mind of a child, always recording impressions as they come. T'ai Chén the beautiful and the grim frontiersman are alike faithfully portrayed. He lives for the moment, and the moment is often wine-flushed like the rosy glow of dawn, or grey and wan as the twilight of a hopeless day.

L. CRANMER-BYNG.

## 12. Yuan Mei

Yuan Mei (1715-1797). One of the happiest poets the world has known was born at Hangchow, the capital of the province of Chekiang, two hundred years ago. At an early age he was admitted to the college of Han-lin with the degree of doctor, and shortly afterwards sent to Chiang-nan as district magistrate. But the city of Nanking has the greatest claim upon his memory, for there he retired at the height of his career owing to a breakdown caused by overwork. There, on the outskirts of the city, he lived the life of a garden philosopher, a second Mr. Hsuan-wei. This garden became a shrine of literary pilgrimage frequented by the most talented men and women of the day.

Yuan Mei's genius was universal. He was by turn philosopher, historian, prose writer, and poet. A learned Frenchman, M. Imbault-Huart, discovered in an unfortunate moment that he had written a cooking manual and forthwith dubbed him the Brillat-Savarin of China. His manual is, in fact, a dainty trifle compounded of epicurean philosophies and served with *sauce piquante*. But Yuan Mei will live not by reason of his table, but for the sake

of a garden made immortal beyond the Palace of the Moon, where the beloved of the goddess has followed the radiant children of his dreams.

### 13. *Han Yu* (768-824)

One of the wittiest and most brilliant of the T'ang statesmen and philosophers, Han Yü's poetry has been overshadowed by his prose essays, which have been upheld as models of Chinese literature. He attempted to found a new school of Confucianism, being a bitter opponent of the Buddhist tendencies of his day, and was banished to a semi-barbarous region which he set to work to civilise. Su Tung-p'o, the great Sung poet, wrote a magnificent poem to his memory which has been translated by Professor Giles (cf. *Chinese Literature*, p. 161).

L. CRANMER-BYNG.

### 14. *Tu Fu*

Tu Fu (712-770), whom his countrymen called the God of Verse, was born in the province of Hu-Kuang, and this was his portrait from contemporaries:

He was tall and slightly built, yet robust, with finely chiselled features; his manners were exquisite, and his appearance distinguished. He came of a literary family, and, as he says of himself, from his seventh to his fortieth year study and letters occupied all his available time. At the age of twenty-seven he came to the capital with his fame in front of him, and there Li Po the poet and Ts'én Ts'an became his friends, and Ming Huang his patron. He obtained a post at Court somewhat similar to that of Master of Ceremonies in our own Court. Yet the poet had few sympathies outside the artistic life. He was so unworldly and so little of a courtier that when the new Emperor Su Tsung returned in triumph to the capital and appointed him Imperial Censor, he fulfilled his new duties by telling his majesty the whole unpalatable truth in a manner strangely free from ornamental apology, and was promptly rewarded with the exile of a provincial governorship. But Tu Fu was no man of affairs, and knew it. On the day of his public installation he took off his insignia of office before the astonished notables, and, laying them one by one on the table, made them a profound reverence, and quietly withdrew.

Like his friend Li Po, he became a homeless wanderer, but, unlike him, he concealed his brilliant name, obtaining food and patronage for his delightful nameless self alone, and not for his reputation's sake. Finally, he was discovered by the military governor of the province of Ssüch'ü, who applied on his behalf for the post of Restorer of Ancient Monuments in the district, the one congenial appointment of his life. For six years he kept his post; then trouble in the shape of rebel hordes burst once more upon the province, and again he became an exile. The last act of this eventful life took place in his native district: some local mandarin gave a great banquet in honour of the distinguished poet, whom he had rescued, half drowned and famishing, from the ruined shrine by the shore where the waters had cast him up. The wine-cup brimmed again and again, food was piled up in front of the honoured guest, and the attendant who waited was Death. The end was swift, sudden, and pitiful. The guest died from the banquet of his rescuer.

Of all poets Tu Fu is the first in craftsmanship. It is interesting to add that he was a painter as well, and the friend of painters, notably the soldier-artist, Kiang-Tu, to whom he dedicates a poem. Possibly it is to this faculty that he owes his superb technique. He seeks after simplicity and its effects as a

diver seeks for sunken gold. "The Recruiting Sergeant" has the touch of grim desolation, which belongs inevitably to a country plundered of its men and swept with the ruinous winds of rebellion.

Li Po gives us Watteau-like pictures of life in Ch'ang-an before the flight of the Emperor. The younger poet paints, with the brush of Verestchagin, the realism and horrors of civil war. In most of Tu Fu's work there is an underlying sadness which appears continually, sometimes in the vein that runs throughout the poem, sometimes at the conclusion, and often at the summing up of all things. Other poets have it, some more, some less, with the exception of those who belong to the purely Taoist school. The reason is that the Chinese poet is haunted. He is haunted by the vast shadow of a past without historians—a past that is legendary, unmapped and unbounded, and yields, therefore, Golcondas and golden lands innumerable to its bold adventurers. He is haunted from out the crumbled palaces of vanished kings, where "in the form of blue flames one sees spirits moving through each dark recess." He is haunted by the traditional voices of the old masters of his craft, and lastly, more than all, by the dead women and men of his race, the ancestors that count in the making of his composite soul and have their silent say in every action, thought, and impulse of his life.

L. CRANMER-BYNG, *A Lute of Jade*.

### 15. Chinese Verse Form

In a previous book, *A Lute of Jade*, I have referred to the structure of Chinese verse. It is necessary to remember that the Chinese language is made up mostly of monosyllabic words expressing root-ideas. There are also a sufficient number of diphthongs to give variety. As Sir John Davis points out in his *Poetry of the Chinese*, such words as *seen* and *leen* correspond nearly to the English *lion* and *fluid*. Chinese is essentially a language in which vowel-sounds prevail and the few consonants are far from being harsh. In the literary language, used by all the great poets, the only terminal consonant is *n*, as in *Ch'un*, and its nasal *ng*, as in *Hong*. The only harsh initial is *Ts*, as in *Tsin* and *Tsz*. There are only about four hundred different sounds in Chinese, and, in order to discriminate between words of similar sound, resort has to be made to tones which are akin to musical notes. Of these tones only two count in the making of Chinese poetry, namely, the *Ping*, or even tone, and *Tsze*, or accentuated, with its three modifications known as *Shang-sheng*, the rising note, *Khu-sheng*, the entering note, and *Ruh-sheng*, the sinking note. These tones, as Mr. Charles Budd points out \* in his interesting essay on the Technique of Chinese Poetry, "are used to make rhythm as well as to express meaning." Rhymes occur in the even lines of a poem. In five-syllable verses there is a cæsura which comes after the second syllable, and in poems of seven syllables after the fourth.

Another form of Chinese verse construction is that of parallel lines. This particular form is well known to us in Hebrew poetry, especially the Psalms. It does not follow that each word and line should answer its fellow, but there must be "a marked correspondence and equality in the construction of the lines—such as noun answering to noun, verb to verb," etc.

The following is an example quoted by Sir John Davis in his essay on the Poetry of the Chinese:

A hundred—a thousand, ten thousand projects are hard to accomplish;  
Five times—six times—ten years very soon arrive.

\* *Chinese Poems*, translated by Charles Budd. Henry Frowde & Co.

When you have found a day to be idle—be idle for a day;  
When you have met with three cups to drink—then drink your three cups.

Chinese poems generally consist of four, eight, twelve, or sixteen lines. There are, indeed, longer poems, but the whole idea of a Chinese poet is to condense and suggest. Professor Giles says: "There is no such a thing as an epic in the language." As regards metre, the four-character line is chiefly confined to the ancient collection of national ballads made by Confucius and known as *The Book of Odes*. The usual metres of the great poets of the T'ang dynasty were five and seven-character lines. These are called *Shih*, or regular poems. The six or eight-character line is only to be met with alternated with others in poems of irregular metre.

L. CRANMER-BYNG, *A Feast of Lanterns*.

### 16. Epochs in Chinese Poetry

Great dynasties in China made for great art and literature largely under the influence of a national awakening. Expeditions and embassies to distant lands brought back new ideas; and, above all, the fusion of two widely different types of mind, the Northern or Confucian type and the Southern or Taoist, prevented thought from becoming too formalised and gave a new impetus to creative imagination. Small kingdoms meant perpetual warfare and militarism; hence few names famous in literature will be found in the annals of dynasties like the Ch'i and early Sung.

The poetical metres of each age vary according to the requirements of the period. In the beginning we find the short metre of the *Odes* well adapted to the needs of a simpler civilisation. Gradually, as society becomes more complex, the verse needs grow until finally the five and seven-character line of the T'ang dynasty appears, and after that the form has become stereotyped. The great Sung poets continued the T'ang tradition, but added little to it, and after them only a few flashes of original genius illumine here and there a dark horizon.

The oldest period of all, that of the *Odes*, has a range of nearly 1,200 years, from 1765 to 585 B.C.

Towards the close of the Chou dynasty, in the fourth century B.C., Ch'u Yuan wrote his celebrated *Li Sao*, or "Falling into Error." He may be called the father of the Chinese nature poets.

The Han dynasty, B.C. 206 to A.D. 221, contains very little poetry of the first rank.

T'ao Ch'ien belongs to the eastern Tsin dynasty, which lasted about one hundred years, from 317 to 419 A.D. This author has been comparatively neglected as yet by Western scholars. Many of his poems would be well worth translating.

The T'ang dynasty, 618 to 905 A.D., is the golden age of Chinese poetry. Most of the famous poets belonged to this period. Li Po, Tu Fu, Po Chü-i, Han Yu, are only a few names mentioned at random.

From 907 to 960 A.D., came the period of the Five Dynasties, with no great name outstanding.

The Sung dynasty, from 960 to 1206 A.D., ranks after the T'ang as the second greatest epoch in Chinese literature. The most celebrated poets of this age were Ou-Yang Hsiu and Su Tung-p'o.

The Mongol, or Yuan dynasty, lasted from 1206 to 1368 A.D., and produced one great poet, Liu Chi.

During the Ming dynasty, A.D. 1368-1644, novel-writing was greatly in

vogue, but there is nothing in the poetry of this period that would challenge comparison with the masterpieces of an earlier date.

The Manchu dynasty, which began in A.D. 1644 and only recently ended, contains the names of Yuan Mei and Chiu Tsy-Yung, whose Cantonese *Love Songs*, translated by Mr. Cecil Clementi, are fast becoming a classic.

The great storehouse of Chinese poetry is still untouched. Forty-eight thousand nine hundred are the collected poems of the T'ang dynasty alone, and of these possibly some three or four hundred have been translated into various European languages.

As the Chinese have more than 40,000 ideographs, and a good Chinese scholar is one who can commit to memory about eight or nine thousand, the difficulties in the way of translation are obvious. Nor is it easy to find one who is both a profound linguist and a poet as well. One who is so deeply indebted as I am to the researches of the great sinologues of the nineteenth century is conscious of treading on delicate ground even in referring to the relations between scholarship and literature. The fact, however, remains, that with a few rare exceptions, the scholar has attempted too much. Poetry is poetry, whether it be written in Chinese ideographs or European characters, and no knowledge of Chinese will enable one to interpret the poet's message in another tongue. There is an Italian proverb which says that to translate is to traduce, and this is profoundly true of ninety-nine translations out of a hundred. Before one line is placed on paper the translator from the Chinese must have soaked himself in the traditions of the Chinese masters, their reticence, their power of suggestion, their wonderful colour-sense, and, above all, their affinity and identification with their subject. He might well study the methods of the Chinese painters, who never put brush to canvas before committing all essential details to memory. He might read the story of Wu Tao-tzu, the greatest of all Chinese masters, as told by Mr. Laurence Binyon in *The Flight of the Dragon*: "He was sent by the Emperor to paint the scenery of a certain river. On his return, to every one's surprise, he had no sketches to show. 'I have it all,' he said, 'in my heart.'"

The poems I have chosen to render belong chiefly to the school of landscape. This does not mean that Chinese poets avoided the grim realities of life and the ceaseless struggle for existence. Poets as far apart as Chu Yuan in the fourth century B.C. and Li Hua in the ninth century A.D. have given us battle pictures which have seldom been equalled. Both these mighty panoramas deal with the pomp and panoply of armed hosts, the shock of battle in the bleak plains of Tartary, and finally moonlight upon the quiet faces of the innumerable dead. In the time of the T'angs universal conscription obtained. Tu Fu, in his famous poem "The Recruiter," gives a wonderful description of the deserted countryside from which all the menfolk had gone. Many soldiers were also poets, famous generals like Yo Fei, more often than not commanders of small military posts on the lonely caravan routes in Chinese Turkestan.

Yet, after all, the deepest feeling of the Chinese poets is revealed in their word-painting of the woods and mountains and water. Kuo Hsi, the great artist of the Sung dynasty, in his essay on painting, says:

"Mountains make water their blood; grass and trees their hair, mist and cloud their divine colouring. Water makes of mountains its face, of houses and fences its eyebrows and its eyes, and of fishermen its soul."

And again of water he writes:

"Water is a living thing, hence its form is deep and quiet, or soft and smooth, or broad and ocean-like or thick like flesh, or circling like wings, or jetting and slender, rapid and violent like an arrow, rich as a fountain upon the sky or running down into the earth where fishermen lie at ease. Grass

and trees on the river banks look joyous, and are like beautiful ladies under veils of mists and cloud, or sometimes bright and gleaming as the sun shines down the valley. Such are the living aspects of water." \*—L. CRANMER-BYNG,  
*A Feast of Lanterns.*

### 17.

The principal rules of Chinese versification are identical with ours, and they date back forty centuries: as for instance, the division of lines into an equal number of syllables; the cæsura; the rhyme; and the division of verses into four lines. In a quatrain, the two first and the last lines rhyme; the third does not rhyme. The following fragment is given as an example:

#### IN THE PALACE

*Tsi tsi hoa chy—pi y mene.  
Hiei jen siang ping—ly khang hiene  
Han tsing yo chouo—khouan tchon sse....  
Ying ou tsien teou—pou kan yene.*

A charming and original effect, a quality possessed only by Chinese poetry, results from the ideographic nature of the characters; one gets a definite impression from the appearance of the writing, and an unexpected vision of the whole poem. The flowers, the forests, the streams, and the moonlight, all these present themselves before one has commenced to read. For example, in the poem of Li-Tai-Pé, "Good Fortune on the High-road," the effect at first glance is of prancing horses, and before knowing what he will say, one seems to see the poet riding haughtily among the flowers.

To-day in China, as of old, the words and music are always united; the poems are not recited but sung, and in most cases the singing is accompanied by the Chinese lyre, the "Kine." But this sacred instrument can only vibrate in the presence of burning incense and before those who are mentally fitted to listen, for its delicate strings break if their waves of melody encounter unattuned ears.

Twelve centuries before Orpheus and fifteen before David and Homer, the Chinese poets were singing their verses to the music of the lyre, and they are unique in that they are singing still, almost in the same language and to the same melodies.

JUDITH GAUTIER.

### 18. Japanese Poetry

Yone Noguchi needs little introduction to readers of poetry in English, as he has published many poems in our language, and has visited this country and England. He is now a professor in a Japanese university.

EDITOR.

### 19.

In their limitation of a poem to the presentation of a single impression, and in their ability to present that impression with the utmost vividness and

\* *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, by Ernest Fenollosa, vol. ii, pp. 14 and 15.

with the sternest economy of words, the Japanese poets are strangely akin to the Imagists, the youngest of the modern schools.

Preface to *Japanese Lyrics*, translated by LAFCADIO HEARN.

20.

The earliest specimens of Japanese Poetry which exist are contained in the two chronicles *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*. Some of these songs claim to belong to the Sixth Century, B.C.; but there is no reason to believe in their authenticity. The *Kojiki* was composed in 712 and the *Nihongi* in 720 A.D. The poems in them were probably composed in the preceding three centuries.

Of the two hundred and thirty-five poems contained in these two chronicles, not one is of any value as literature. A chronological study of Japanese poetry would certainly cause the student to abandon the subject in despair. Japanese poetry, as an art, may be said to begin with the *Manyō Shū* ("Ten Thousand Leaves Collection"). This anthology appears to have been compiled by Otomo no Yakamochi, who died in 785 A.D. A few isolated poems in this collection may belong to the fourth and fifth centuries but most of them were written between 670 and 750 A.D. It contains 1473 *tanka* or "short-songs" and 324 *naga-uta*, "long-songs."

The *tanka* is a poem of five lines. The first and third lines contain five syllables; the rest, seven. It is in this form that almost all Japanese poetry is written. The *naga-uta* "Long-Songs" of the *Manyō* (in which five-and seven-syllable lines alternate) were an unsuccessful experiment. The Japanese poets quickly realized that they had no genius for extended composition, and after the Eighth Century the *naga-uta* practically disappears. I have only found three "Long-Songs" which seemed to me worth including. But the curious will find 263 of them translated in Dickins' *Japanese Texts*. . . .

At the beginning of the Tenth Century appeared the second great anthology, the *Kokin* ("Ancient and Modern") *Shū*. The preface is dated 905. The collection was made by command of the Emperor Daigo. It contains 1111 poems, including a few of early date omitted by the *Manyō*. Next in value to the *Kokin* stands the *Shūi Shū* or "Supplement" compiled in 996 A.D. It contains 1351 poems including a score or so from the *Manyō*. But it is chiefly through translations of yet another anthology, the *Hyakuninishū* that Japanese poetry is known to English readers. This collection of a "Hundred Poems by a Hundred Poets" was made c. 1235 A.D., but the choice on the whole does little credit to the taste of Sada-aye to whom the compilation is attributed.

ARTHUR WALEY, Introduction to *Japanese Poetry*.

21.

Japanese poetry is confined to lyrics, and what, for want of a better word may be called epigrams. It is primarily an expression of emotion. We have amatory verse, poems of longing for home and absent dear ones, praise of love and wine, elegies on the dead, laments over the uncertainty of life. A chief place is given to the beauties of eternal nature. The varying aspects of the seasons, the sound of purling streams, the snow on Mount Fuji, waves breaking on the beach, seaweed drifting to the shore, the song of birds, the hum of insects, even the croaking of frogs, the leaping of trout in a mountain stream, the young shoots of the fern in the spring, the belling of deer in autumn, the red tints of the maple, moon, flowers, rain, wind, mist, these are among the favorite subjects which the Japanese poets delight to dwell upon. If we add some courtly and patriotic effusions, a vast number of conceits more or less pretty, and a very few poems of a religious cast, the enumeration is tolerably

complete. War-songs, strange to say, are almost wholly absent. Fighting and bloodshed are apparently not considered fit themes for poetry.

It is not only in its form and subject matter that Japanese poetry is limited in its scope. The modern poet of Europe makes free use of the works of the Greek and Roman poets as models and as storehouses of poetic imagery. Much of his very language comes from the same source. But the poets of Japan have deliberately refrained from utilizing in this way the only literature which was known to them. That their refinement of language and choice of subjects are in some measure due to an acquaintance with the ancient literature of China is hardly open to question, but they allow few outward signs of it to appear. Allusions to Chinese literature and history, although not wholly absent, are unfrequent, and the use of Chinese words is strictly tabooed in all poetry of the classical type. There was a substantial reason for this prohibition. The phonetic character of the two languages is quite different. Chinese is monosyllabic; Japanese as polysyllabic as English. A Chinese syllable had far more complication and variety than those of Japanese words. It may have diphthongs, combinations of consonants and final consonants, none of which are to be found in Japanese, where every syllable consists of a single vowel or of a single consonant followed by a single vowel. It is true that the Japanese, in adopting Chinese vocables, modify them to suit their own phonetic system. But the process of assimilation is incomplete. The two elements harmonize no better than brick and stone in the same building. It was most natural, therefore, for the Japanese to refuse these half-naturalized aliens admission to the sacred precincts of their national poetry, although by so doing they sacrificed much in fullness and variety of expression, and deprived themselves of a copious store of illustration and allusion to which their prose writers resort even too freely.

The acknowledged euphony and ease of pronunciation of the Japanese language is greatly owing to that propriety of the syllable which has just been described. But it is at the same time a source of weakness. It makes smooth versification almost a matter of course, but it also renders impossible much variety or force of rhythm. The Japanese poet can hardly do otherwise than obey Pope's precept:—

*Then all your Muse's softer art display,  
Let Carolina smooth the tuneful lay,  
Lull with Amelia's liquid name the line.*

The whole language is composed of words made up, like Carolina and Amelia, of syllables with open vowels preceded by single consonants or none. Nor is he under any temptation to

*Rend with tremendous sound your ears asunder  
With gun, drum, trumpet, blunderbuss and thunder.*

His phonetic resources simply will not admit of it. Pope further advises that

*When loud surges lash the sounding shore,  
The hoarse rough voice should like a torrent roar,  
When Ajax strives some vast rock's weight to throw,  
The line too labours and the words move slow.*

But it is vain for the Japanese poet to adopt this counsel. With a language like the old Japanese it is only within the narrowest limits that it is possible to

make the sound an echo to the sense. It is probably in some measure to the want of variety of rhythm which results from this quality that the preference of the national genius for short poems is due.

The mechanism of Japanese verse is simple in the extreme; unlike Chinese, it has no rhyme, a want which is plainly owing to the nature of the Japanese syllable described above. As every syllable ends in a vowel, and as there are only five vowels, there could only be five rhymes, the constant reiteration of which would be intolerably monotonous.

In the Japanese poetical language all the vowels are of the same length, so that quantity, such as we find in the poetry of Greece and Rome, is unknown. Nor is there any regular succession of accented or unaccented syllables, as in the poetry of modern Europe, the Japanese laying hardly any greater stress upon one part of a word than on another. In short, the only thing in the mechanism of Japanese poetry which distinguishes it from prose is the *alternation of phrases of five and seven syllables each*. It is, in fact, a species of blank verse.

W. G. ASTON, *A History of Japanese Literature* (1899).

## 22.

Mr. Stewart-Dick has well said, "In art, the European requires that everything should be stated with the utmost fulness of a tedious realism, before he can grasp its meaning, but to the more cultured Japanese a mere hint or slight suggestion is sufficient." The majority of Japanese poems are little odes of five lines, of thirty-one syllables; some "Hokku" contain but seventeen. There are, of course, some of greater length, such as the "Naga-Uta"—Long Lays of the Manyôshû, or "myriad leaves collection," an anthology of verse (to quote Mr. E. V. Dickins) "wholly Japanese in diction and phrasing . . . and exhibiting almost the oldest, perhaps the truest, certainly the most pleasing portraiture extant of the Japanese world in its archaic age." The exact date of its compilation is matter of controversy, some writers contending that it was compiled by Yakamochi (who died A.D. 785); others claim that Môroye (died 757) commenced the task, which was completed by Yakamochi. The dates of the Lays range from about A.D. 347 to 759, a period of over four hundred years. Some of the Lays appear to be elaborations of still earlier poems, found in the Kojiki, or Ancient Annals, A.D. 712, containing the mythology and primitive history of the nation.

Japanese poetry is wanting in narrative poems; even ballads are few and far between; political and (strange to say in so soldierly a race) war songs are mostly absent. Emotional poems and those dealing with the various aspects of nature form the majority, and except for the "Wasau" or Buddhist hymns, there are few of an exclusively religious character. The Nara period—eighth century—was the Golden Age of Japanese Poetry. Among the higher classes, the art of verse-writing was universally cultivated. The poetry of the Nation was, however, almost exclusively written by, and for, the Court and officials; hence the subjects of many of the Lays, such as the journeyings of the Court to different capitals, elegies on the deaths of Royal Personages, love incidents of lords and ladies of the Court, the sending of officials to distant marchlands, etc.

CLARA A. WALSH, *The Master-Singers of Japan*.



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